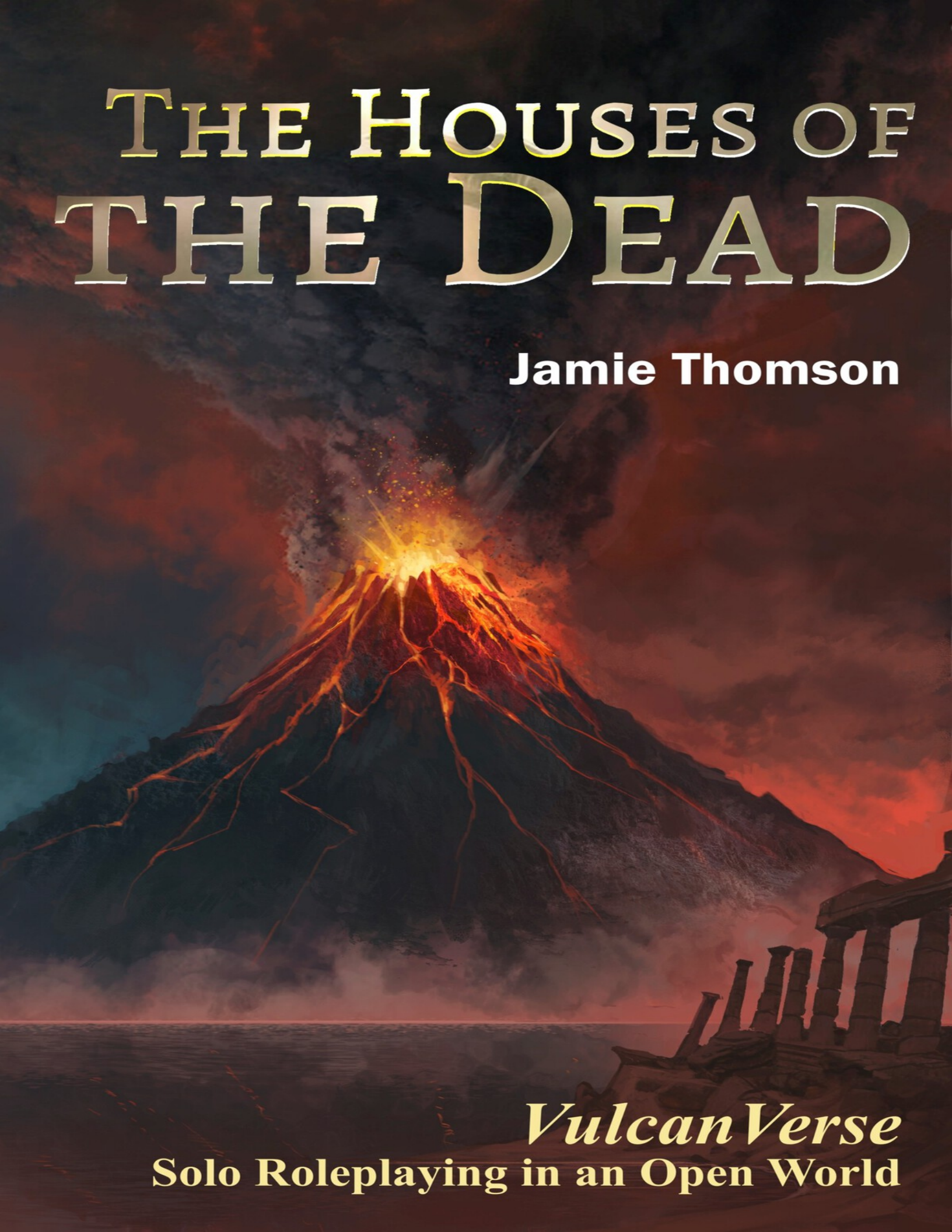
The Houses of the Dead

Jamie Thomson



VulcanVerse

Solo Roleplaying in an Open World

THE HOUSES OF THE DEAD

Jamie Thomson

‘Easy is the descent into hell; all night and day the gates of dark death stand open;
but to retrace your steps and breathe again the upper air, this is the task and toil.’
– Virgil

A larger and more detailed copy of the map of Hades is to be found here

Your Vulcanverse Adventure Starts Here

Vulcanverse is an open-world solo role-playing game. You can play the books in any order, starting anywhere you like, moving to other books whenever you travel to the region they cover. Instead of a single storyline, there are virtually unlimited adventures.

To play all you need is two dice, an eraser and a pencil. You only need one book to start, but by collecting other books in the series you can explore more of the Vulcanverse.

If you have already adventured using other books in the series, you will know your entry point into this book. Turn to that section now.

If this is your first Vulcanverse book, read the rest of the rules before starting at section **1**. You will keep the same adventuring persona throughout the books –

starting out as a novice but gradually gaining in power, wealth and experience throughout the series.

ADVENTURE SHEET

You can find an online Adventure Sheet here or here. The Sheet lists everything you'll need to keep track of while playing. Don't fill it in yet. That will happen as you begin your adventure.

ATTRIBUTES

You have four attributes which typically range from −1 to +2 as you're starting out. You will discover your attribute scores as you play. They are:

CHARM: your understanding of people and their motives.
GRACE: how agile, supple and quick you are.
INGENUITY: cunning and reasoning, and your ability to think on your feet.
STRENGTH: physical might and endurance.

The maximum possible innate score in an attribute is +5. If you are already at maximum and are told to add to your score, it has no effect.

Items that augment attributes

There are items you can acquire that boost your

attributes while you have them. These are:

CHARM: **laurel wreath** (+1) and **golden lyre** (+2)
GRACE: **recurve bow** (+1) and **winged sandals** (+2)
INGENUITY: **hornbook** (+1) and **abacus** (+2)
STRENGTH: **hardwood club** (+1) and **iron spear** (+2)

You can only use the bonus from one such item at a time. So if you had a **laurel wreath** that gives CHARM +1 and a **golden lyre** that gives CHARM +2, you'd only get the CHARM bonus from the latter. Similarly, two **laurel wreaths** still only give you a +1.

An item can augment your attribute score above the innate limit of +5. If you have a STRENGTH score of +5 and you possess an **iron spear**, your total STRENGTH bonus when making a roll counts as +7.

Making an Attribute Roll

Attribute rolls are made to see if you succeed at a task. These are rolls of two dice with a difficulty that you must equal or beat to succeed.

For instance, you might be told: 'Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 7'. You roll two dice, add your STRENGTH score (including the modifiers for any one possession that boosts STRENGTH) and to succeed you need to get 7 or more.

*Example: You are at the bottom of a cliff. To climb it you need to make a GRACE roll at difficulty 5. You roll two dice and score 4. Your GRACE attribute is −1 but luckily you have **winged sandals** which give a +2 GRACE bonus, so your modified GRACE is +1, which is just enough to make the roll a success.*

A roll of double 6 (‘boxcars’) is always a success regardless of difficulty. A roll of double 1 (‘snake eyes’) is always a failure regardless of modifiers.

WOUNDS

The Adventure Sheet has a box labelled Wound. This is unticked at the start of the adventure. From time to time you may be asked to put a tick in it. You only have one Wound tick at a time; if you’re asked to tick the box when it is already ticked, you don’t add another.

While the Wound box is ticked you have injuries, and these will cause you to deduct 1 from any attribute roll until the box is unticked.

SCARS

You begin with no scars, but may acquire them from lasting injuries or from returning from the afterlife. Scars are a mixed blessing. Many people will shun

you because of them, but others will admire or fear you more.

POSSESSIONS

Possessions are always marked in bold text, like this: **iron spear**. If you come across an item marked like this you can pick it up and add it to your list of possessions.

You can carry up to twenty possessions at a time. If you come across an item you want when already at your limit, you'll have to discard something to make room. There are places in the Vulcanverse where you can leave possessions and come back for them later.

MONEY

You can carry any sum of money (measured in a currency called pyr). You'll discover as you play whether you have any money to start off with.

GLORY

Glory starts at 0 but will grow as you perform deeds that increase your renown. With high Glory you will be recognized as a hero and given more respect by those you meet.

CODEWORDS

There is a list of codewords here. Sometimes you

will be told you have acquired a codeword. When this happens, put a tick in the box next to that codeword. If you later lose the codeword, erase the tick.

The codewords are arranged alphabetically for each book in the series. In this book, for example, all codewords begin with N. This makes it easy to check if you picked up a codeword from a book you played previously. For instance, you might be asked if you have picked up a codeword in a book you have already adventured in. The letter of that codeword will tell you which book to check (eg if it begins with O, it is from Book 2: *The Hammer of the Sun*).

TITLES

Titles record the achievements you have earned, marking you as the champion of a city, protector of a temple, admiral of a fleet, or even a monarch. You will be told when you acquire a title.

BLESSINGS

If you fail an attribute roll, you can use up a blessing to roll the dice again. You can only do that once per roll, so you cannot use a second blessing to get another reroll if the first one fails.

You can have up to three blessings at a time. You

start the adventure with no blessings. Usually the place to get blessings is at a shrine or temple, but you may find other opportunities to acquire them.

COMPANION

As you travel the Vulcanverse, you will meet some people who are willing to journey with you. You can have one companion at a time. When you pick up a new companion you must remove your current companion, if any, from the Companion box. You can also part company with a companion at any time just by deleting their name from the box. You do not have a companion at the start of the adventure.

CURRENT LOCATION

You'll use the Current Location box from time to time to keep track of where you are. You will be told when to use it. Whenever you are told to record an entry number in your Current Location box, first delete any number that was already there.

NOTES

Use the Notes box on your Adventure Sheet to keep a record of quests, clues or other things you need to remember.

That's all you need to know to get started on your

adventure. Now turn to **1.**

1

In your waking moments you rarely think of your early life. The world is harsh, drawing a stark line between the quick and the dead, and so there is little time for idle reverie.

But when you sleep and your soul becomes unpinned from your body, time is a river that can flow both ways. Sometimes you see yourself then as an infant, standing on the hard-packed floor of your home as various uncles and aunts come with gifts for your birthday.

There is a man whose face is twisted by a scar that runs across his right eye, a sightless milky orb. He holds out a hand from which an old sword-cut sheared several fingers. Your uncle Nicomachus.

‘No, little one, come to me,’ calls your aunt Terpe from across the room, singing a little song that makes you laugh in delight.

Your uncle Sophos has a gift for you. ‘See these pictures of distant lands,’ he says, holding up a book whose coloured pictures blaze as if with inner light. ‘When you are a little older you will read the words that describe these lands and travel there in your imagination.’

In the doorway waits your aunt Eremia. She never joins the throng at the hearth, always has one foot outside. ‘Imagination’s a fine thing. Better still to travel there in person.’

It is as though this moment has happened already. The four wait, and then you go to one of them. But which?

Scary uncle Nicomachus ► 393

Friendly aunt Terpe ► 30

Clever uncle Sophos ► 667

Restless aunt Eremia ► 114

2

You release the **bronze butterfly** into the air. It flutters up, and begins to glow ever so slightly. It'll need time to fire up properly.

What does it say?

'Man is but the dream of the butterfly.' ► **548**

'Eat my nuts, losers!' ► **745**

'Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee!' ► **113**

3

The Acheron river, the river of woe, runs all the way up to its headwaters in the far northern mountains of Hades. It flows slowly into the delta, its waters the colour of twilight, a kind of bluish grey, infused with a strange, starry glow, as if moonbeams were trapped forever on the riverbed.

You see a barge bobbing languidly on its surface. A shadowy figure, long punting pole in hand, waves at you.

'Want to go upriver, sir? Only five pyr?' he shouts. Or rather, whispers loudly for he too, like nearly all of the denizens of the underworld, is a shade. You notice the barge is called *Shadow on the Water*. It is black, as it seems are all the barges of Hades, but this one is lined with purple trim. A flag flies from the stern – a black kraken on a purple background. Will you:

Hire the barge ► **765**

Go south-west to woodlands ► **228**

Go north-west to the Black Bayou ► **273**

East overland ► **51**

4

You approach the sculpted portico of the mausoleum. It is pale yellow in colour, and somehow untouched by age, as if it were newly erected. There is a low entrance at the bottom of the portico, with an inscription nearby. It reads:

'A MAID OF GOLD AM I. I MARK THE GRAVE OF MIDAS. WHILE THE BLACK WATERS FLOW AND THE WHITE TREES GROW TALL, HERE WILL I WATCH OVER THE TEAR-DRENCHED TOMB AND TELL THEM THAT MY FATHER LIES HERE.'

So, it appears this is the tomb of the legendary King Midas. The entrance appears to be a simple open doorway, seemingly unguarded.

Enter the tomb of Midas ► 221

Leave this area ► 76

5

Cross the item off your Adventure Sheet. Wolfshadow is chasing you down – you throw the item in his path, and, thank the gods, it works. He stops to feed, and you are able to make your escape. Will you go:

North ► **51**
South ► **537**
West ► **228**
South-east ► **25**
Follow the river north-east ► **504**

6

Prometheus leans down towards you. ‘I have nothing to reward you with now, as you can imagine after all this time getting my liver eaten, but the day will come when I will answer your call and stand by your side, human, that I swear to you. For now, I give you this title – the Liberator!’

Gain the title **the Liberator**. Now that Prometheus is free, all the great iron doors and their mouthy guardians have fallen open and the three of you make your way back to the hole that you and Deucalion floated down. Prometheus, giant-sized as he is, easily climbs up and out, from where he lowers down some ropes to haul you both out.

Deucalion says his farewells, thanking you.

‘Perhaps we will meet again,’ he says before Prometheus picks him up and turns to leave.

‘There will be a time when you will need me, mortal, and I will be there, I swear it!’ he booms as he strides across the landscape. Soon you are alone once more.

► **234**

7

You hold up the sceptre and say, ‘I claim this sceptre as my own. It is mine to wield!’

‘No…’ wails Agamemnon. He staggers, as does his son. The darkness that filled them with energy flows out of them to plunge into the sceptre. Then that darkness, like creeping twilight, seeps from the sceptre to shroud you in a shadowy nimbus of night.

Agamemnon and his son seem to shrivel up in front of you, becoming ancient shades of the dead once more. They stare at you, a look of empty, forgotten despair on their phantasmal faces.

‘What now, father?’ mutters Orestes.

‘I am a father? I can’t recall. What was I? Did we..? Ah, so much is lost, so much…’

They turn and shuffle away, sad lonely figures. You follow. Outside, all of his followers, his army of the dead, have also fallen into emptiness, reverting to ancient shades wandering the gloomy halls of Hades, no longer animated by the power of night.

Agamemnon’s rule is over. Inside yourself, you can feel tiny tendrils of darkness worming their way into your heart. Now it is you who hear the call of the night. What have you done?

► **700**

8

You make your way back up out of the dark without incident, and come to the entrance to Tartarus under the lee of an outcropping of igneous rock that looks like a set of outspread wings, known as the wings of death. Will you head back down the mountain side or go back into the abyssal caverns?

Leave the slopes ► **410**

Go down into darkness ► **670**

9

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 816 immediately. If not, read on.

‘Ah, welcome back to my workshop,’ says Perdix the inventor, murdered nephew of Daedalus.

Perdix, inventor, craftsman, and smelter can perform various tasks for you. If you have some **copper ore**, you can get him to make you a **copper cog** on a one for one basis. For each **copper ore** you cross off, you can get one **copper cog**. This is free of charge, as he doesn’t use all the ore to make a cog. You can also buy a few things from him.

	To buy	*To sell*
clockwork owl	50 pyr	–
brazen trumpet	50 pyr	–
vinegar of Hades	20 pyr	15 pyr

When you are done, Perdix asks you a question. ‘Will you help me? I have made this.’

He shows you a beautifully engraved copper casket.

‘What does it do?’ you ask.

‘I won’t lie to you. It is carved with a puzzle that only Daedalus himself could solve. When it is opened, it will explode and hopefully kill my uncle outright. Will you take it? Give it to him if you see him. My revenge will then be complete.’

‘If I take this, how do you know I’ll give it to him at all?’

‘I don’t. But my guess is, knowing my uncle, that once you’ve met him, you’ll hate him too. Or perhaps not, but worth a shot, I figure.’

Note the **copper casket of doom** on your Adventure Sheet, should you decide to take it.

When you are ready, if you have the title **Lion Slayer** and do *not* possess the **Nemean bagh nakh** ► 790

Otherwise, you return to the Asphodel Meadows ► 75

10

The city is divided into roughly four quarters or suburbs – the Palace, atop the hill, mostly empty now; Elysium, where the souls of the honoured dead reside; the Asphodel Meadows, where the souls of those who were neither famous nor notorious or those simply unworthy of Elysium reside; and the Mourning Fields for those who cannot break the bonds of tragedy from their former lives, bonds that bind them in grief and sorrow or broken-hearted, unrequited love. The pits of Tartarus (for those who truly offended the gods) are elsewhere.

Nearby, you notice an enterprising merchant has set up a shop of some kind. Where will you go:

The market ► 224
Elysium ► 89
Asphodel Meadows ► 75
Mourning Fields ► 298
The Palace of the Dead ► 333
Leave the city ► 696

11

☐☐☐☐

Put a tick in one of the boxes. If four boxes are now ticked ► **471** immediately. If not, read on.

You start sifting through the ash and broken rocks around the base of the volcano. It is said the volcano belches up its lava from the deepest depths of Tartarus. Who knows what might also have been thrown out of there? Roll two dice.

score 2-5: ► **543**
score 6-8: ► **652**
score 9-12: ► **714**

12

If you have the codeword ***Nefarious*** ► 756 immediately. If not, read on.

If you have the codeword ***Nought*** or ***Nervous*** ► 673 immediately. If not read on.

You have arrived in a far corner of the underworld, a lost, forgotten corner where there is only a cold wind that chills your heart as well as your bones, an ancient graveyard and a long-abandoned temple to Hades. From here you can go:

North to the mountains ► 226
East ► 521
West to the Sacred Way ► 474
South ► 117

13

Ignoring her call, you swim out into the cool, black waters. It is actually quite pleasant on the skin, like swimming in some kind of moisturiser, albeit black. It doesn't even smell that bad. You begin to relax – until something slithers around your waist. And then something else around your throat. Tentacles? A huge snake?

There is no time to find out, for you are dragged down into the depths, into utter darkness where you cannot even see your hand in front of your face. You are crushed, drowned and devoured in the inky darkness of the bayou. Fortunately, the gods have not abandoned you, despite your stupidity.

► **111**

14

You hurl the **shrivelled heart** to one side of the chamber, hoping the maggots will go for it. But to them it is just another piece of rotting flesh, of which they have a surfeit. On the other hand, you are fresh and still living, and the act of throwing the heart has alerted them to your presence.

They swarm all over you, a writhing mass of mouths, eager to feed upon you. You are overwhelmed and devoured in seconds. At least death is quick. And for you, it is not the end. ► 111

15

You have come to the Lake Cocytus, where you'd left a young woman to her fate after she'd fallen through a hole in the ice. Instead of rescuing her you took her satchel and left. The hole in the ice is still out there. Will you:

Go fishing at the hole ► **335**

Leave this place ► **586**

16

‘No, of course I don’t know who *you* are, pitiful mortal wretch,’ says the creature in a voice like iron filings scraped down a blackboard, ‘but I can tell you who I am – Syna the spiderling, high priestess of this temple, and daughter to Arachne herself!’

She raises up her blade-tipped forearms, ready to strike. Perhaps just stepping out wasn’t the best plan. Desperately you say, ‘What’s that?’ and point behind her. Make a CHARM roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **245**

Fail ► **375**

17

This is where Death Dealer, the champion of Thanatos, came for you, but there is no sign of him now. You are travelling on the Sacred Way in the southern parts of Hades. Above you, the endless grey skies blanket the land in a gloomy miasma of despair. From here you can go:

North along the road ► **474**
South along the road ► **579**
East, inland ► **228**
North-east, inland ► **117**

18

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **811** immediately. If not, read on.

The Garden of Persephone is a desert of black ash, a charred, smouldering ruin. Smoke still twirls up from the burned out pavilion.

Suddenly you are overwhelmed by fatigue. A strange sleepiness steals over your limbs and you sink into an unexpected slumber. In your dreams, Persephone herself comes to you, dressed in long flowing robes, her skin pale like alabaster. She wears a wreath of flowers around her head, and she is breathtakingly beautiful, even when angry, as she is now, with a face like thunder.

'How dare you burn my garden up like that, you barbarian! Brute! Thug! Ruffian!'

This is not good, you are being berated by a goddess – you beg for forgiveness. If you have the codewords ***Oedipus*** or ***Olifant*** or the title **Favoured of Demeter** ► **616** immediately. If not, read on.

Persephone curses you in your dreams. You wake up to find that you have lost all your blessings, if you had any.

► **416**

19

You take the arrow. ‘Thank you,’ you say, ‘but are you seriously telling me that if I shoot this arrow, it will never reach its target?’

‘Try it,’ says Xenophanes, ‘Let us test the hypothesis!’

‘This should be interesting,’ says Cleanthes, raising his eyes.

You nock the arrow to a bow and aim at a nearby tree. The philosophers watch, fascinated. All except Aristippus who is takes the opportunity to steal food from everyone’s plates while his colleagues are distracted. You let fly.

► 82

20

‘You did it,’ exclaims Helen, ‘I can’t believe it!’ You hand over the **silver seal of Hades**. Cross it off your Adventure Sheet and gain the codeword ***Noodles***.

‘Right then, time to get on with it. I’ll find my way to Arcadia. When you are ready, come and look for me near the Wineries of the Nectar of the Gods or a nice riverside location. I’ll try and set up near there. This could be the beginning of a great partnership.’

She leaves to prepare herself. What will you do now?

Listen to the bard ► **160**

Talk to the shades in the corner ► **475**

Leave and head north ► **346**

Leave and head to the delta ► **493**

21

There is an old half-rotted rope that runs down into the depths. It seems solid enough, so you inch your way down. Slowly the light dims as you descend. At the bottom, the well is dry but you find some grisly human remains. It appears to be the long dead body of a girl. Judging by the angle of her head, she fell – or perhaps was thrown – down the well and broke her neck. Thin, parchment-like skin is drawn tautly over the small skull. Her tattered clothes seem to have once been a pale blue in colour but now they are ragged. But wait – is that a dried bloodstain around what could be a stab wound? Who – or what – would stab a child and then throw them down a well?

You notice tiny silver buckles on her pitted leather sandals, shaped like little flowers, but then a doleful sob catches your attention. You look to the side and see an alcove set back from the well bottom and, within it, eyes glowing palely in the dark.

Get out of here ► **168**

Wait and see what happens ► **516**

22

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **813** immediately. If not, read on.

You have been tasked with rescuing Lampeto, one of the daughters of Ares, cursed by the gods to be eaten by Blubberjaw the daemon for all eternity for her crime. Princess Myrina of the Halizon sent you.

But how can you even get to the banks of the river, for the heat is blistering and will roast your flesh ‘til it drops off your bones like slow-cooked lamb.

If you have a **mammoth hide** *and* **vinegar of Hades** ► **402**

If not ► **787**

23

Lose the codewords ***Neverending*** and ***Projectile***. Gain the codeword ***Neveragain***.

You let loose at Wolfshadow as he runs in on you. The arrow hits home unerringly, right between his eyes. With one final whimper, the undead wolf collapses in a heap and slides up to your feet, dead in an instant. You can hardly believe it. Cross the **golden arrow of Artemis** off your Adventure Sheet; its purpose done, it has dissipated into nothingness.

After you've burned the hideous, flayed body of the undead wolf, just to be sure, you investigate the cave.

It is a grisly sight. There is blood everywhere with numerous dismembered bodies scattered around, gnawed bones, half eaten heads – a den of utter horror. But you are a hardened adventurer, nothing stands between you and your loot! You find amidst the ruined, twisted flesh of his victims, 150 pyr, a **lava gem**, some **honey of Hades** (made in the gardens of Persephone, removes one wound; cross it off after use) and the **Helm of the Lost Hero**. This ancient helmet is rusted and cracked, and is of no use on its own, but perhaps it will be useful later. Better hold on to it...

For your heroic deed, you also get +1 Glory.

Now ► **367**

24

You hack mightily, lopping off limb after limb, but you misjudge one of the bramble beast's attacks and it rakes you across the legs, ripping them open. You fall to the ground.

Tick your Wound box.

If you were wounded already, then this second wound is fatal, and you bleed out in the Garden of Persephone – at least your blood will feed her plants ► 111

If you still live, read on.

The wound is painful indeed, but you have learned from your mistake and are able to sense the rhythm of the bramble beast's attacks.

► 104

25

If you have the **sceptre of Agamemnon**, roll a die. If you score a 1 or a 2 ►**150**; if not, read on.

You are at the outskirts of the Slimeswamp. You can smell its fetid stink even from here. Will you go:

Into the swamp ► **38**
North-west to the Styx ► **145**
West ► **537**
East ► **412**
South to the Sacred Way ► **731**

26

If you have some **shade warriors** ► 126 immediately. If not, read on.

Two pale and ghostly figures step out to block your path. They are dressed as hoplite warriors armed with spear and shield but their antique armour is tarnished and dented, their weapons rusty. They are lost souls who died in battle that still wander the mournful roads of Hades, clinging to half-forgotten memories of glory, even in death.

‘Glory to the victors!’ says one in a deep, sepulchral voice.

‘Blood for our lord Ares!’ says the other.

They cannot be reasoned with for now they know only one thing – battle lust. You will have to fight these shade warriors.

If you have a **bone flute of Koré** and this box ☐ is empty ► 535 immediately. If not, tick the box and then make a GRACE or a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► 376

Fail ► 292

27

‘I have your **gold obols** here, dread lord,’ you say. Cross them off your Adventure Sheet.

‘Thank you, mortal, that is a relief. She was an impudent thief!’

‘A minx indeed,’ you reply.

‘Caused me all sorts of problems, admin wise. You have no idea what it’s like having to keep track of the all the souls, who’s paid and who hasn’t, who goes to Elysium or Tartarus and all that!’

‘I can imagine,’ you sympathise, as you wait for your reward.

Charon shrugs. At least it looks like a shrug, it’s hard to tell under all those tattered black shrouds and the heavy black cowl. Charon waits. You wait. And then:

‘Oh, I see! Of course, you deserve a reward. Let me see, what have we here?’

Charon rummages through various items that have ended up in his barge.

‘Here we are, this seems to be the sort of thing you warrior heroes like,’ and he hands you a suit of **sepulchral armour**. It is an ancient rusting suit of ceremonial armour from a bygone age, really to be worn at funerals rather than in a real fight or battle, but still, you can hardly refuse Charon himself.

He nods at you, so you don the armour. Note **sepulchral armour x 1** on your Adventure Sheet. It will block one wound before it falls to pieces (cross it off after). You also gain the title **Friend of the Ferryman**. Note it on your Adventure Sheet too.

‘Better than nothing, I suppose,’ you mutter as you take your leave.

From here you can go:

East into the desert ► **686** in *The Hammer of the Sun*

South into the desert ► **400** in *The Hammer of the Sun*

North to the southern gate of Vulcan City ► **555** in *Workshop of the Gods*

South on the Sacred Way ► **72**

West into Hades ► **193**

28

If you have a **baby in a basket** stored here or on your Adventure Sheet ► 300. If not, read on.

You are in King Agamemnon's Isle of the Blessed. He has gifted you a rather fine villa in Elysium. It is a lovely spot in the only place in Hades where the sun shines, even if it is a fake, magical sun. You have a few vases filled with flowers of Elysium. Although black and veined in red, they look quite fetching and the air is filled with a not unpleasant scent, a welcome relief from the smell of decay and death that pervades elsewhere. You even have a servant, supposedly a faithful, ghostly shade named Briseis, although it seems she doesn't quite see it that way. She calls herself the rightful inhabitant of the villa and often rails at you to leave and that you don't belong here and nor does King Agamemnon.

ITEMS AT VILLA

But anyway, here you can relax (well, sometimes), rest and heal yourself if you are wounded (untick your Wound box, if ticked). You can also store items or money or retrieve them, as you wish. Simply write them in the box or add them to your sheet. Don't forget to cross them off your Adventure Sheet or Store when depositing/making a withdrawal.

When you are ready to leave, if you have the codeword ***Nullify*** and do *not* have ***Neutralised*** ► 241

Otherwise ► 10

29

Something seems off to you. A little pushback might be in order. ‘And what if I refuse to pay?’ you say.

‘Then your soul will wander these shores for a hundred years.’

‘But I am not dead,’ you reply.

‘Bah, You would defy me, the great Charon, son of Nyx? I’ll have you chained in the belly of Tartarus where your liver will be torn out and eaten every day by harpies!’ he bellows, his voice now sounding rather raucous and shrill. Such a fate would be awful indeed – if he is who he says he is. What will you do?

Charge! ► **208**

Pay up ► **359**

30

Terpe greets you with a trill of laughter. She lifts you in her arms and you gaze back into her clear grey eyes which sparkle with frank good humour.

‘Put your trust in the Bright Lord, my darling,’ she coos in your ear. ‘Laurel leaves on your brow will serve better than a battered helm, and beguiling words will vanquish more foes than any sword.’

Did you know then who she spoke of? In dreams there is no chronology or logic. It is Apollo. Mark him on your Adventure Sheet as your god and then ► **769**

31

Rhadamanthus was right. Amazingly, a long dead warrior-king has launched a coup of sorts and taken over part of Hades. How is that possible? You will have to find out, but first you must find a way to get into Elysium. The guards are numerous and well-armed. You won't be able to just fight your way through. If you have 3 or more scars ► **434**; if not, read on. Will you:

Try to talk your way in ► **692**
Try to bribe them ► **157**
Find another way in ► **356**
Come back later ► **10**

32

Lose the codeword ***Niggle***.

H for the many headed Hydra, E for Elysium, R for Rhea, mother of the gods, A for Acheron, the river of woe—and Zeus loves me? The goddess Hera of course!

As you say her name, there is a whirring click and the box pops open. Inside rests the sceptre of Agamemnon. It pulses with a strange, dark light, as if it were shrouded in night itself. You reach for it.

► **262**

33

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 225
immediately. If not, read on.

The great archway has these words written over it:

EREBUS
THE HALLS OF NIGHT

You step into darkness – and are plunged into the blackest night. No torch, nor lamp or lantern can penetrate this darkness. If you have a **bronze butterfly**, you can release its reddish glow, or the **hubcap of Helios**, it will light the way, or some **phoenix tears**, you can rub them into your eyes so you can see in the dark (cross the tears off your possessions if you use them).

If you use one of these ► 106
If you have none of these ► 832

34

Nimbly and, truth be told, with balletic grace, you spin aside. The lamia staggers forward, growling in angry frustration. You nearly gag at the smell of her, but she is off balance – you have the advantage.

You must fight her. Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► 595

Fail ► 722

35

If you have the codewords ***Nervous*** or ***Nought*** ► **280**

If not, but you have the title **Spider's Bane** ► **737**

If not, but you have an **iron key** ► **677**

If you have none of these, read on. You cannot think of any way to smuggle them out. As they are shades, they cannot pass through the gates of Hades, it is as simple as that. You tell Lampeto you will return when you have found a way of getting her out.

'Bah. Well, hurry up. We cannot stay in this land of dull nothingness forever!' barks Lampeto.

'Come now, have patience,' you say. 'After all, surely dull nothingness is like heaven compared to all those years getting cooked and – '

'Yes, yes, you're right, thank you. Now go and get us out of here,' she says. 'Remember, I will reward you well!'

You take your leave. ► **505**

36

Gain the codeword ***New-Apollo***.

You sing a beautiful paean in praise of silver-tongued Apollo, and the altar seems to glow with a golden halo for a moment. You have successfully reconsecrated this shrine, and now you can get blessings here. If you are a worshipper of Apollo, blessings are free. If not, you must pay 10 pyr per blessing. You can have a total of three blessings at a time. Each blessing can be used to roll again when you fail an attribute check (CHARM, GRACE, INGENUITY or STRENGTH) but only once in any given situation – so if you fail the re-roll, you can't spend another blessing to try again.

When you have finished here ► **493**

37

‘Gentlemen, you are philosophers, yes?’ you say. They draw themselves up, ‘yes indeed, the greatest!’ they say.

‘Have you heard of the paradox of Zeno’s arrow?’ you ask.

‘Of course we have!’

‘Well, I have the very arrow, right here.’ You show them the white shafted arrow, with the words *Zeno’s arrow* etched into it.

‘By Athena’s wise-arse, is it so!’ says Sacrotes, wide eyed.

‘Can it be?’ asks an incredulous Plota.

‘Indeed it is, and I intend to test the paradox, but I need two philosophers to vouch for the outcome. Who better than the two greatest philosophers or all time, Sacrotes and Plota?’

‘Quite so, quite so,’ they reply pompously.

‘Come, gentlemen, I shall shoot the arrow outside, into one of the white poplars of Hades that grace this fine inn.’

► **227**

38

If you have the title **Spider's Bane** ► 88 immediately. If not, read on.

The Slimeswamp is a fetid morass of steaming muck and foul, brackish water. Small strips of impacted mud form pathways through the quagmire. Corpses lie just below the surface, somehow preserved despite the filthy waters. Mangrave trees grow out of the slime – half corpse, half tree, twisted faces leering at you out of gnarled tree trunks. Their branches stretch out, and on the end of them foul egg-like seeds are ready to drop onto the drowned corpses. You can see one corpse that has such a seed already germinating within it. You wonder how the swamp keeps up its supply of corpses when one of the trees' boughs twitches and reaches for you, branches grasping like fingers. Luckily they are quite slow and you are able to jump back. As you do so, you put your foot on one of the submerged corpses' chests – its eyes flick open for a moment, before the eyelids close up again. In horror, you realise they are not dead, but trapped in some kind of paralytic sleep. Will you:

Try to rescue the 'corpse' ► 643
Go deeper into the swamp ► 773
Get out this horrific place ► 25

39

□

Put a tick in a box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 732 immediately; otherwise read on.

You approach the rotting hulk of a once mighty trireme, prow down in the mire of the delta. Though its timbers are encrusted with mud and decay, you can still see its sleek lines and the graceful cut of its bow. The figurehead is strangely preserved, though; it is of white-armed Hera, queen of the gods.

As you draw near, you notice the remains of a man, crushed under the mouldering prow of the boat. Hera seems to be gazing down at the body.

Wiping some black filth away, you are able to make out the name of the ship. It is the *Argo*. Curiosity piqued, you climb up the sides of the ship to explore.

► 116

40

You enter a large, rough cavern of solid rock, so large its roof is shrouded in shadow. It is lit by the glow of a river of lava that runs along one side, warming up the cave nicely. In the middle is an enormous rock upon which is pinned the body of a giant – the titan Prometheus. His arms and legs are held in place by massive chains of bronze. There is a lot of scarring along one side of his body where, as a cruel punishment for his crimes, a giant eagle rips out his liver every day and eats it by order of the great Zeus. Prometheus' liver then regenerates overnight, ready for another day of torture, lying there, alone, abandoned, waiting for the eagle to come down and feed. You cannot imagine his suffering. How cruel the gods can be! And his crime? Creating man from clay and then compounding that by teaching them about fire, and the arts of civilisation.

As you draw near he turns his massive head. His face is covered in an enormous beard but his eyes show a lifetime of suffering, and his brow seems furrowed in a crease of permanent pain. He stares at you both in astonishment.

'Can it be... is that you, my son?' he says in an ancient rasping voice.

'Yes father, it is I, Deucalion!'

'Did your mother..?'

'Yes, I was rebirthed, but she was forced to give me up to the river or lose me forever. Luckily for us, this adventurer found me, and brought me up.'

Suddenly there is an ear-splitting shriek and out of the shadows up above a great bird comes hurtling down.

'The Caucasian eagle, spawn of Typhon!' shouts Prometheus, his face a mask of terror. 'No, no...' he mutters, straining desperately against his bronze chains.

'Quickly, break the chains, whilst I distract the eagle!' cries Deucalion. He backs away and starts laying out various raw and bloody meats from his backpack onto the ground. The eagle, having eaten only the liver of Prometheus for only the gods know how long, rushes to eat up the delicious treats. It lands with a great squawk, and starts feeding. But how much meat was Deucalion able to stuff in his backpack?

You have to break the chains that bind the titan quickly. Will you use:

Raw power ► **218**

Your brains ► **84**

41

You root through the pile of ash once more and find… more ashes. There is nothing else here. ► **608**

42

Because you are either heroic or quite possibly very stupid, you have returned to the abyssal depths of Tartarus. The marble plaques on the walls of the cave are still there. They read:

'ONLY THE LOST, THE STUPID, THE DERANGED AND THE UNHINGED, THE GUILTY AND THOSE WHOSE SOULS ARE STAINED WITH THE BLOOD OF INNOCENTS ENTER HERE FOR THIS IS THE HEART OF HELL. WHICH ARE YOU?'

'WELCOME, FOOL, TO TARTARUS, HOME TO THE TITANS, NIGHT-SHROUDED NYX, AND HER CONSORT, EREBUS, HE WHO IS DARKNESS, AND THEIR DREAD SONS, THANATOS, WHOSE TOUCH IS DEATH, AND HYPNOS WHOSE BREATH IS SLEEP.'

And then you see the same figure crawling out of the darkness, towards the light, as the last time you were here, dragging herself along. She looks up at you. Before she gets far, out of the shadows, the winged terrors – the Furies, or servants of the Furies, grab her with cruel iron-cold talons and drag her back down into darkness.

'No...' wails the shade. This must be her punishment, to forever reach for the light, but only to be snatched back at the last moment. This is a place of horror and dread.

Will you:

Continue into the dark ► **429**

Maybe come back later ► **8**

43

The bandits pause, looking you over.

‘By Hermes’s hairy arse, is that… you know?’

‘Err… could be..’

‘If it is...’

‘We’re dead meat.’

‘Run, lad, run!’

And with that the two bandits sprint away. Your reputation precedes you it seems. In their haste to get away, they drop a few coins. Roll a die, multiply the result by ten, and add that many pyr to your Adventure Sheet (ie you get 10-60 pyr). As they disappear into the distance, they are still arguing.

‘Hades, you said. Easy marks you said,’

‘All right, all right, my bad.’

‘The living are worse than the dead!’

‘I know, I know...’ Their voices fade away in the chill winds of Hades. Time to move on. Will you go:

North ► **51**
South ► **537**
West ► **228**
South-east ► **25**
Follow the river north-east ► **504**

44

The heat is blistering, but you hang on near the edge of the river in the hope of salvaging a **lava gem**. You manage to get close enough for a few seconds to make a grab at one. Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 9.

Succeed ► **95**

Fail ► **734**

45

Mormo finds the **child's doll** in your backpack. She gasps, and picks it up, uttering a strangled sob.

'Oh my children, my dear children,' she says, starting to weep. 'They made me, they made me do it. I'm so sorry, my little ones.'

She falls to her knees and starts to sob uncontrollably. She has forgotten you for the moment. While she is on her knees weeping, you strike her down. She dies at your feet, clasping the doll to her bosom. 'My children, my dear ones, mother is coming!' are the last words of Mormo, vampire lamia.

You wonder about her story, how she became what she was. Nevertheless, she was too dangerous to be allowed to live. Who knows how many future victims you have saved by this act?

Gain the codeword ***Neutralised***.

On her body you find 100 pyr. Also you are able to extract some **lamia venom**. Note it on your Adventure Sheet. You look around her lair. Like her sister, she has a shelf with the skull trophies of her victims each carefully labelled. You read a few.

'Here lies Morish, his brain was the size of a walnut.'

'Rosalinda, barbarian from the far north – tasted of sour milk'.

'Antocles – wounded me, so I roasted him alive.'

'Dione. The daughter of a titan, so her blood was simply divine. I saved some for later.'

And so on. You search further, and find a vial of blood, labelled **Dione's blood**. Note it on your Adventure Sheet and ► **678**

46

You try to dodge aside but you are too slow. One claw slams into your chest, the other into the back of your legs and you are brought to the ground with a bone crashing crunch, your chest and legs ripped open.

Tick your Wound box. If it was ticked already then this double blow finishes you off, and you die alone in this benighted tomb. Perhaps the gods will show mercy on your soul ► **111**

If you still live, you manage to pick yourself up off the ground. You note the foot plate that set the trap off, so you won't set it off on the way out – assuming you make it out.

Up ahead, the corridor opens up into some kind of antechamber. Will you:

Continue ► **720**

Leave the crypt and come back another day ► **193**

47

You play so beautifully that the warrior shades are entranced. Enchanted in fact, so that they will follow you as your retainers.

Note that you have the **shade warriors (3 uses)** on your Adventure Sheet. They fight for you by adding + 1 to any STRENGTH or GRACE rolls but only for your next three rolls (cross off each ‘charge’ when used). After that, they return to the Mourning Fields, cross them off your Adventure Sheet. There is nothing else of interest here and you decide to return to the city.

► **10**

48

You make your way through the cypress trees until you came to the centre of the island, a wide open space with a heap of ruins at the centre. A mound of earth and rubble at the front looms over a yawning cave opening that has been dug out of the earth.

You step into the clearing. Something rumbles from out of the cavernous threshold, and out pops a massive head. It stares at you for a moment, and then out pop two more heads.

‘What have we here?’ says one of the heads.

‘Look, it’s alive,’ says another.

‘Oh yes,’ says the third, ‘that’ll make a nice change.’

‘What you have here is the hero who will slay you once and for all, Polykephales,’ you say with all the courage you can muster.

The three heads look at each other and then back at you and laugh, filling the clearing with a mocking cacophony of monstrous cackling. The heads move into the clearing, bringing a slithering serpentine body behind them, the size of a small house. The three heads rear up before you.

If you have a **royal diadem** ► 430

If not ► 554

49

The kraken grabs the food and shoves it into its beak. Then, incredibly, it extends another tentacle and lightly caresses your head before falling back into the river and disappearing.

'Astonishing,' says the bargeman, I've never seen anything like that in all my years, and I have lived – well, unlived, that is – several lifetimes.'

Gain the title **Kraken Friend**. Where to now?

Disembark and east ► **51**
Disembark and south-west ► **228**
Disembark and north-west ► **273**
Continue upriver by barge ► **364**

50

If you have the codeword ***Nature*** ► 725 immediately. If not, read on.

If you have the codeword ***Nurture*** ► 465 immediately. If not, read on.

You walk in through doors that are barely hanging on by their hinges. You are amazed to find the inn is still open. There's an innkeeper at the bar, some customers in the corner, and a drinker propped up at the bar. And then you notice that they are all shades, ghosts of the dead, still acting out the lives they led before they died. The innkeeper, a matronly woman copiously robed, waves you over, her fingers wispy tendrils of shadow.

The man at the bar looks at you with ghostly but nevertheless bleary drunken eyes. 'I slept with Aphrodite once you know,' he mumbles. 'I did!'

'Only because Zeus wanted to punish the goddess, and forced her to,' mutters the innkeeper.

'We had a kid and everything!'

'Oh be quiet, Anchises, we've heard it all before,' says the innkeeper, looking you up and down. 'Wait,' she says, 'you're alive!' You nod. 'I… sorry, we're not supposed to serve the living, I can't help you. Unless…'

'Unless?'

'Well, this land is given to us so long as we tend to the trees that are sacred to our Lord, Hades. As you can see, they are not doing so well. What can we do? We are but shades. You, however…'

'What do you need?' you ask.

'Blessed soil of Arcadia! That'll make anything grow. Bring me some of that, and I'll show you what we've got to offer.'

If you have some **blessed soil of Arcadia** ► 103 immediately. If not, gain the codeword ***Nature***. There is nothing more for you here and it is time to move on. Will you go:

North along the Sacred Way ► 346

East to the delta ► 493

51

A few houses of the dead are scattered across this darkling plain. The sky is a murky grey, like a polluted lake, presiding over a wasteland littered with wandering shades, and filled with the sounds of the wailing dead. You skirt the edges of a great rift in the ground, a chasm that falls away into deep darkness. Faint howls and screams waft up on the stinking breeze that emanates from those dread-filled depths.

Nearby you spot a low, single storey building. It seems out of place for it is not a tomb or a house of the dead. Will you:

Investigate the building ► **499**
Go north ► **458**
West to the Acheron ► **3**
East to the Styx ► **504**
South to the bridge ► **145**

52

You pull the lever. There’s a bang, a blinding flash, a feeling of being whisked off your feet, spun around, turned upside down and shaken until you think you are going to throw up and suddenly you find yourself on the eastern edges of Hades, on the border with the arid land of Notus.

► 72

53

Birds do sing their own songs, it is true, but will the strixes, savage blood-drinking birds of doom, appreciate them? You call upon Apollo of the silver tongue to inspire you, and sing to the birds. Make a CHARM roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **259**
Fail ► **503**

54

The moment you sit on the ebon throne of Hades, a great voice fills the hall, as if from nowhere, ‘Who dares usurp the throne of the King of the Underworld!’ and you are instantly struck dead by a mighty thunderbolt. But even though you have blasphemed against the gods by sitting on this throne, your journey is not yet over. The gods have decreed otherwise. ► 111

55

☐

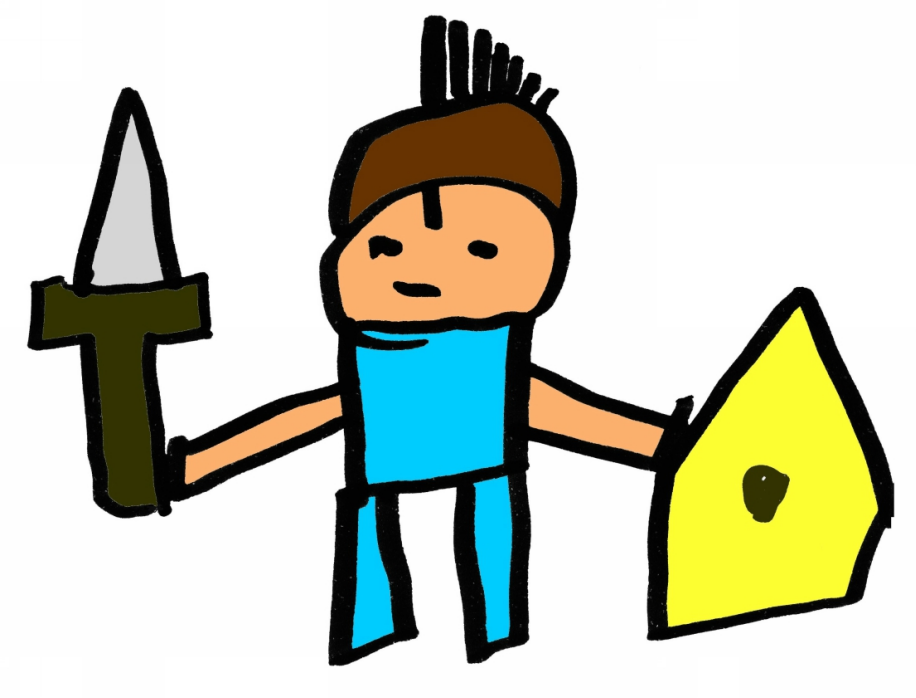
If there was a tick in the box already ► **831** immediately**.** If not, put a tick in it now and read on.

You hand Apelles a **box of paints**; cross it off your Adventure Sheet. He is overjoyed. Immediately he gets you to pose, weapon in hand, with the flaming Phlegethon, the river of fire, behind you and starts painting.

You wait. And wait. After a break to get some exercise, you wait some more, until finally the painting is finished.

‘I have called it Portrait of an Adventurer in Hell’ says Apelles.

You look it over in anticipation. And sigh.



How could it have taken so long, even? Clearly Apelles has lost something along the way. Probably been in Hades for too many years. Or perhaps he never was an artist at all, perhaps his name is not even Apelles, perhaps he’s just a lost shade who invented a persona to cover the forgotten emptiness inside. Or…who knows?

‘Magnificent, isn’t it?’ says Apelles. ‘Here, please, take it. I shall begin another!’

Feeling sorry for the old painter, you nod politely and take the painting. Note **the portrait** on your Adventure Sheet. You note absently that it is

actually signed ‘Apelles’. Anyway, time to move on.

‘Do come back and visit, won’t you?’ says Apelles as you leave. Will you head:

North ► **60**
West ► **330**
South-west ► **504**
South to the Phlegethon ► **169**
South-east ► **193**

56

You walk through the shattered archway entrance of the farmhouse. The interior is an open courtyard, enclosed by the farm building. The courtyard is littered with broken pottery, rusted tools and an old, charred wooden cart. To left and right, a corridor leads to the interior.

Go left ► **387**

Go right ► **215**

57

E for Erebus, he who is darkness, R for rivers, as the Styx, Acheron and Lethe are all rivers of Hades, O for the mountain nymphs, the Oreads, and S for the Sphinx, the giver of riddles – '*EROS*', god of love!

As you say his name, there is a whirring click and the box pops open. Inside you see a handful of **pomegranate seeds**. Note them on your Adventure Sheet and gain the codeword ***Nifty***.

You have completed one of the great labours of Hades. Write the number **416** in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet (in place of the number already written there, if any) and then ► **600**

58

You pull the lever. There is a moment of sickness and dizzying momentum, and suddenly you are up to your ankles in slimy swamp water.

► 38

59

You are able to duck and dive in-between the deadly swipes of the bramble beast. Soon, you are able to anticipate its strikes, and you get yourself into a position where you can hit back. Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **104**

Fail ► **24**

60

You have arrived at the headwaters of the river Styx. You climb up to a flattish area of ground flanked on three sides by tall, imposing mountains of grey rock. All that grows on this grey rock is a brownish lichen, with occasional patches of red from the blood moss that also grows there. It gives the mountains a blood-splattered look. The river surges up sluggishly from a spring at the bottom of the mountains, just at the entrance of a large cave mouth. From there its dark waters run down across Hades all the way to the Delta of Darkness.

Nearby you see a statue of dull grey rock and also a wide pool on the other side with a single tree on its bank, its fruit -laden branches hanging down over the waters. You have never seen fresh fruit like that in the underworld. A man waist-deep in the pond is desperately trying to grab one of the fruits, but for some reason he can't seem to reach it no matter how he tries.

Will you:

Investigate the statue ► **733**
Investigate the pool ► **629**
Go back downriver ► **330**
South towards the plains ► **193**
South-east to the volcano ► **405**
South-west to the land between the Phlegethon and the Styx ► **711**

61

Lachesis, the one in white, holds out her hand. The other two Fates' brows furrow in puzzlement.

'Now, give me that honey cake,' says Lachesis, in a remarkably normal voice, 'the one you're supposed to give me.'

'What? This isn't the time for snacks,' says Clotho, sounding more like an irritated mother than a goddess.

'Cake? When the fate of this world hangs in the hands of this hero?' says Atropos.

'Yes, honey cake! What's the point of controlling destiny itself if you can't give yourself a little treat from time to time,' says Lachesis grumpily. She glares at you. 'Now give me that honey cake. After all, it is written, so it shall be, destiny is all, the fates have spoken and so on.'

You find yourself unable to refuse, and you hand over the **honey cake**. Cross it off your Adventure Sheet.

'Thank you,' says Lachesis, grabbing the cake and stuffing it into her mouth entire.

'You didn't even share a singly crumb,' says Clotho in a disgusted voice.

'Well, what can I say?' mumbles Lachesis with her mouth full. 'It was written in the stars, so what could I do?'

'Bah, you greedy tyke,' quips Atropos. Lachesis shrugs a 'whatever' shrug.

'Anyway, thank you, mortal,' she says. 'Here, have this.' And she turns her attention to the skein of destiny on the podium, the thread that is your life. She makes an adjustment.

Note that you have the **Favour of the Fates x 1** on your Adventure Sheet. The next attribute roll you fail will automatically be reversed and succeed instead. If and when that happens, cross off the **Favour**. (Effectively it is a one-use blessing that will always succeed.)

'What, you interfere with the skein of destiny – for cake?'

'Yup!' says, Lachesis.

Clotho heaves a great sigh, shaking her head. She turns her attention back to you.

'Now, mortal,' says Clotho, 'choose your destiny.'

'It's not really a choice though, is it?' says Lachesis.

'Indeed, we already know what it's going to be,' says Atropos.

'All right, all right, can we just get on with it? I have work to do,' says

Clotho.

What will you do?

Return to the surface ► **8**

Go down into Erebus ► **730**

62

A massive funeral barge, black with copper shields around its hull, is heading straight for you. Warrior shades, two on each side, are punting rapidly. Its old name has been painted out and replaced with crude, blood red letters that read *The Plunderer*.

‘Oh no, not those accursed river pirates again,’ says your bargeman. ‘We’ll have to pay up.’

The shades wear antique naval armour and are armed with ancient short spears. Pirates in life, and still pirates in death.

Surrender ► **395**

Fight ► **211**

63

If you have the codeword ***Neveragain*** ► 598 immediately. If not, read on.

If you have the codeword ***Projectile*** ► 269 immediately. If not, read on.

If you have the codeword ***Neverending*** ► 432 immediately. If not, read on.

You come to a rocky outcrop deep in the forest, a cave mouth set in its side. Bones litter the outside of the cave. The half-eaten corpse of what looks like a Myrmidon warrior from the city of Iskandria in the desert is lodged in the entrance to the cave. How did that get here, you wonder?

► 563

64

Such a paltry sum! You drop it into the crater (cross it off) and offer up a prayer to Thanatos, hoping for a benison. But all you hear is a deep, angry rumbling from the depths. You have managed to anger Thanatos, he who is death incarnate, and you are cursed. Note that you have a **curse** x1. Your next attribute roll is at −1 on the dice. After that, cross off the **curse**.

Perhaps you should be more generous when petitioning the gods. What will you do now?

Explore the mountainside ► **644**

Leave the volcano ► **410**

65

You trudge on into the Slimeswamp. Is it foolhardiness or courage that makes you go on? The hairs on the nape of your neck rise up, and you pause for a moment. Something is wrong. A myriad of eyes appear in the tops of the mangrave trees, lambent green and full of malevolence, staring down at you out of the shadowed tree tops. You turn to take another path but only to see many plate-footed spiders scudding across the swamp waters towards you! You draw your weapons but they swarm all over you. You kill several, but there are simply too many of them and you are overpowered.

If you have some **vinegar of Hades** ► 339

If not ► 159

66

The great gate rumbles open, and a wizened gate-keeper in mourning robes ushers you onward.

‘Only those with grief in their hearts may enter the Mourning Fields. Welcome, pallbearer.’ You continue on down a path littered with broken statues to the Mourning Fields which lie at the foothills of the Necropolis. Here, the houses of the dead are laid out in a grid, like a cemetery in the world of the living but much of it is in a crumbling state of decay. The inhabitants do not care about their surroundings, no offerings are left at the shrines, the walkways are pitted and overgrown with the thorny, black brambles of Hades, or overshadowed by the skeletal branches of bone-white poplar trees. Doors hang on hinges, roofs have collapsed. Everywhere there is an all-pervading sense of sorrow and despair, and wherever you go, you cannot escape the sound of sobbing or the keening wails of grief and misery that pierce the gloom like needles of anguish. This is an awful place.

Nearby, you see green-stained hand prints on the portal of a tomb. From within, sobbing can be heard. Opposite the tomb is a crumbling building with a faded sign that says, ‘The Baths of Klytemnestra.’ Further on, the road descends deeper into the Fields.

Investigate the tomb ► **152**
Visit the baths ► **182**
Explore further ► **26**
Leave the fields ► **10**

67

□

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **804** immediately. If not, read on.

You remember the two bandits, Alex and Georgios, full of bluster, who called themselves Talos and Achilles. They are long gone, but their hideout was under the bridge. You search it, and sure enough, you find a forgotten hidden cache. Inside you find some **honey of Hades**. You can use it to cure one Wound. If you use it, don't forget to cross the honey off your Adventure Sheet.

Time to move on. Will you go:

North ► **51**
South ► **537**
West ► **228**
South-east ► **25**
Follow the river north-east ► **504**

68

You have returned to the philosophers' picnic. They are still there, arguing about... well, everything and anything. Whatever anyone says, someone else says the opposite just for the sake of it.

'Welcome back, adventurer. Have you put the wisdom we taught you to good use?' says Xenophanes.

'That depends on how you define good, doesn't it?'

'Hah, indeed, for that which is good for the cat is bad for the mouse,' says Protagoras.

'Keep this up, and you'll be able to join our picnic group,' says Aspasia with a smile.

But, other than hanging out and discussing the meaning of life, the universe, and everything, there is nothing more for you to do here, so you take your leave.

► **144**

69

You are already badly wounded. The claws of the lamia spill your guts out onto the pallid grey earth of Hades. She shrieks in triumph as she starts to feed on your dying body. The last thing you see is the lamia popping one of your eyes into her mouth as if it were a gourmet delicacy. The last thing you hear is a sibilant voice proclaiming excitedly ‘Oooh, I’m going to drink your brains, yum!’

You are dead, it’s true, but your journey is not yet over.

► **111**

70

You stand your ground, although there must be twenty or thirty of these blood birds. They swoop down to the attack, copper beaks snapping at you.

Make a STRENGTH or a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► 232

Fail ► 825

71

‘Nothing, eh. Well it’s your funeral,’ whispers the phantasmal bargeman. He starts laughing, a strange, whispery, echoey laugh.

You feel the wrath of the river goddess – lose all your blessings, if you have any.

The bargeman ceases his half-mad tittering. ‘Sorry,’ he says. ‘Funerals. In Hades. Funny. Heh.’

You don’t get the joke. Anyway, time to move on.

Continue to the delta ► **762**

Debark onto the south bank ► **537**

Debark onto the north bank ► **51**

72

You are walking along the Sacred Way at the edge of Hades. To the east lies the desert of Notus, but you cannot see it through the veil of the shadow of death that surrounds the underworld. There are only two ways in and out of Hades, the Gate of Ivory and the Gate of Tears. To the west, you can see some kind of lake. The great Gate of Tears is to the north.

If you have the codeword ***Nadir*** ► **498** immediately.

If not, you can go:

North to the Gate of Tears ► **686**

West to the lake ► **639**

Follow the Sacred Way to the south-west ► **731**

73

You ready yourself to do battle with Death Dealer, the champion of Thanatos.

‘You are no coward, I will give you that,’ says Death Dealer and he salutes you. And then cuts down at your head with his axe. This will not be an easy battle.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 9.

Succeed ► **147**

Fail ► **724**

74

You drop 100 pyr into the dark waters at the feet of the goddess (cross them off). She nods, apparently pleased, and sinks back into the river with a booming ‘You may pass.’

Gain one blessing but not if you already have three, as you cannot have more than that. Each blessing can be used to roll again when you fail an attribute check (CHARM, GRACE, INGENUITY or STRENGTH) but only once in any given situation – so if you fail the re-roll, you can’t spend another blessing to try again. Will you:

Continue to the delta ► **762**
Debark onto the south bank ► **537**
Debark onto the north bank ► **51**

75

If you have the title **Queen's Champion** ► 505 immediately. If not, read on.

The Asphodel Meadows are a part of Hades reserved for the shades of ordinary folk, neither heroes nor villains. It is indeed full of meadows, covered in asphodels, but these asphodels are blooms of the underworld – pallid and pale, ghostly flowers of the afterlife. The sky is a uniform grey, the ground plain and flat. It neither rains nor shines here in the meadows. It is a colourless, toneless, dispassionate place. Forever grey.

Dotted amidst the meadows are the dwellings of the dead, mostly pale grey-washed cottages, serviceable and sturdy. As you wander through, you notice several places of interest.

If you have the codeword ***Natron*** ► 161 immediately. If not, read on.

Which will you visit?

The house of Tiresias the Seer ► 198
A nearby stall ► 570
A small workshop ► 435
A barber shop ► 108
Or leave the meadows ► 10

76

It is time to leave this benighted cemetery. But where will you go?

North to the city ► **696**
East to the river Styx ► **330**
West to river Acheron ► **588**
South ► **51**

77

You are about to hack at the tentacle when the bargeman shouts ‘No, wait!’

You hesitate, which is enough time for you to notice the rest of the sea monster – or rather, not very big octopus – that is clinging to the bow. At most it’s no bigger than your chest.

‘Not yet fully grown by the look of it, but they are beloved of Poseidon,’ says the bargeman.

Will you:

Hack at the tentacle anyway ► 425

Drop some **fresh fish** in the water, if you have some ► 797

78

You cannot shift the door, so you start to examine the edges of the chamber. As you pass by one section of wall, the lamp light flickers wildly as if in a draught of wind. Where can that light breeze be coming from? You look closer and find a crack in the wall. You are able to force it open, revealing a hidden water course, an underground river, no doubt a tributary to the river Styx. You drop down, but are struck by a vile stench. Corpses float downstream, bloated, long dead, rotting. These must be those who have died without a coin in their mouths, the obol for the ferryman. Those that cannot pay are cursed to wander the banks of the Styx for a hundred years before Charon will take them into the underworld. But it seems some of them have attempted to cross without paying, and have ended up here, washed down the river. Despite the smell, you have little choice but to follow its course. It must lead somewhere, right?

► **699**

79

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 743 immediately. If not, read on.

Two of the nearby shades, desperately rooting through the ash and the dirt, seem strangely familiar.

‘Honestly, Dad, it’s not fair, I had no idea what was going on but I still got my head chopped off,’ says one.

‘I know son, I’m sorry, but if my plan had worked, Demophon would be the dead one, and you’d be King!’ You recognize that voice. These are the shades of the vizier Abas, and his son Krugmos.

‘Wasn’t worth it, though, was it? Look at us now, scrabbling through the dirt.’

‘Well, we are where we are, so keep looking,’ says Abas. ‘If we find enough lava gems, perhaps we can bribe our way into Elysium.’

‘Bah, all I’ve found so far is this old oil lamp.’

‘Give it here, let me give it a rub.’

You leave them to it. A sad fate, but they brought it upon themselves. Well, at least Abas did, at any rate.

What will you do?

Search through the ashes ► 11
Climb to the top ► 789
Explore the mountainside ► 644
Leave the volcano ► 410

80

You hurl the **daemon’s blood** into her face but she merely slurps it up with her tongue. Cross it off.

‘Yum!’ she says, as she wraps the coils of her snake body around you and sinks her fangs into your neck. Venom courses through your veins. You try to fight back but you sink into unconsciousness in moments.

► **701**

81

You’re too slow, and the King Hydra bites your head clean off. Death is instantaneous. At least Hydna will give your headless body a decent funeral. And the gods may well bring you back to life, for they are not finished with you yet.

► **111**

82

The arrow flies true and thuds into the tree. You turn and give a ‘what did you expect’ shrug.

‘I suppose that was inevitable,’ says Xenophanes.

‘Ah, but how do we know – and how can even you be sure – that you weren’t aiming for the next tree after that one, and the arrow has indeed only travelled half way?’

‘By Athena’s teats!’ says Cleanthes, throwing his hands up in the air. ‘What am I doing with these absurdist clowns?’

‘Nevertheless, the point still stands,’ says Protagoras.

You shake your head, and retrieve the arrow. Aristippus lets out a huge belch. ‘All fine by me,’ he says.

‘Still, it is a goodly reward,’ says Aspasia. ‘For whether it be true or not, it is still the arrow of the renowned Zeno.’

Zeno was indeed a famous Greek philosopher, that’s true. Note **Zeno’s arrow** on your Adventure Sheet and ► **181**

83

The apparition dissolves, tattered black shadows fading away into empty air. ‘Why, Mummy, why?’ is her last cry. Though she tried to kill you, you cannot help but feel sorry for the poor murdered girl’s lost soul. What terrible tragedy happened here?

You catch your breath and look down. Something compels you to take the silver buckles from the body of the murdered girl and sew them onto your own shoes. Moments later, you forget that they are there. Nevertheless, note that you have **silver buckles** on your Adventure Sheet.

You make your way back up to the top of the well. Time to move on and leave this place.

► **412**

84

Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► 529

Fail ► 766

85

The spiderling speaks in a throaty hiss, ‘Is that mortal meat I smell? Did you get out of your cocoon somehow, little human?’

She scuttles around, her spider claws rattling on the stone floor, trying to make out where the smell is coming from. Her face is hideous – two eyes like a human but with the mouth parts of a spider, and a bony crest over a gnarled human-like skull. Then the spiderling screws up her human-like face in disgust.

‘Wait, no, that’s… ugg. I’ll have to get that cleaned up, whatever it is!’ She turns back to the altar. You have the drop on the hideous creature.

Make a STRENGTH or GRACE roll at difficulty 5.

Succeed ► **353**

Fail ► **487**

86

‘Ah yes, the tale of Typhon. There was once a great battle between Typhon, king of the monsters and Zeus, king of the gods. They fought for days, Typhon hurling mountains and fireballs from his eyes, Zeus throwing thunderbolt after thunderbolt at his foe. Every time Zeus hit his foe, bits of Typhon were blown off, to fall all over the earth. But Typhon was said to be so big his head touched the stars, so such things disturbed him not. Until one of Zeus’ bolts took out an eyeball. It fell into the deserts of Notus, where it hit with such force that ripples of sand were blown outward from its landing place, like a rock hurled into a pond. Thus were created the Dunes of Doom.’

- ► **198** and choose again.

87

You've been here before, and have noted the floor plate that triggers the bronze claw trap. Carefully you step around it and move on.

Up ahead, the corridor opens up into some kind of antechamber.

► **720**

88

You have returned to the Slimeswamp, a fetid morass of steaming muck and foul, brackish water. Corpses lie just below the surface, preserved despite the filthy waters by the roots of the mangrave trees that grow out of the slime – half corpse, half tree, twisted faces leering at you out of gnarled, black-barked trunks. Their branches stretch out, and on the end of them, foul egg-like seeds are ready to drop onto the drowned corpses.

This is still a poisonous, terrible, dangerous place, even though you have slain their queen. Nevertheless, with their leader gone, it isn't too hard to avoid the spiders and you can sneak into the Temple of Arachne to take the tunnel to Arcadia if you want.

To go through the tunnel to Arcadia ► **250** in *The Wild Woods*. Otherwise you can go:

North-west to the Styx ► **145**
West ► **537**
East ► **412**
South to the Sacred Way ► **731**

89

If you have the codeword ***Newhouse*** ► **100** immediately. If not, read on.

If you have the codeword ***Night*** ► **28** immediately. If not, read on.

Elysium, also known as the Isle of the Blessed, is separated from the necropolis by a river – of a kind. It is not a river of water, but an abyssal gulf filled with distant celestial bodies, strange constellations and fiery comet trails – the River of Stars. Elysium is in a dimension of its own. A bridge spans the River of Stars, leading to a verdant isle, not as green as Arcadia, perhaps, but certainly a place of light and warmth compared to the rest of the underworld. Only those who were heroic, honourable, righteous and just in life may cross the bridge. And also the living, presumably, as none of them are supposed to ever be in Hades in the first place.

The bridge, made of sleek ebony inlaid with a kind of parquet patterning of white wood from the underworld poplar, is beautiful to look at, but as you draw near, you notice something odd. The bridge has been blocked off with a barricade of shields and outwardly pointing javelins. Behind them stand several ghostly forms, dressed in antique armour from the Trojan wars, a troop of ancient warriors.

‘I am the captain of the bridge, and you cannot pass,’ one of them shouts. ‘Elysium is now ruled by King Agamemnon, and only he decides who can enter or remain.’

You notice that these shades seem a little more corporeal than most, and their voices have a stronger tone to them, more vigorous than the reedy voices of the spectral shades you are used to. There are several of them, well-armed veterans by the look of them.

If you have the codeword ***Niggle*** ► **31**

If not, you cannot enter Elysium at this time ► **10**

90

What will you offer to Thanatos, the god of death?

25 pyr ► **64**

100 pyr ► **175**

one **lava gem** ► **480**

three **lava gems** ► **377**

Or you can give up on the idea completely and:

Explore the mountainside ► **644**

Leave the volcano ► **410**

91

Gain the codeword ***Neverending***.

You turn tail and run as fast as you can. You can hear Wolfshadow howling close behind. Luckily for you, the beast slips on the slimy grey earth, and crashes into a tree. It picks itself up, seemingly unhurt, but it was stunned for a moment or two and you have gained enough time to lose sight of it in amongst the black, gnarled trees of the forest. Quickly, you smear the foul-smelling mud of the forest floor all over yourself and head off in a random direction. Hopefully the stink will throw it off the scent. Soon it becomes apparent that you have indeed, lost your pursuer and you heave a sigh of relief. Time to move on.

► **228**

93

‘You have achieved what only Herakles achieved before you,’ says the god, ‘and he was half immortal to begin with. Truly you are one of the greatest heroes. Songs will be sung celebrating your glory – if the world survives, for now I must tell you your purpose and entrust you with the final and most desperate quest. Come to my temple in Vulcan City, and there I will enlighten you.’

Get the codeword ***Rohan*** in *Workshop of the Gods*. If you do not yet have a copy of *Workshop of the Gods*, make a note that you have ***Rohan*** on your Adventure Sheet.

Now turn to the section number written in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet.

94

You are crossing the Bridge of Hate. Roll two dice:

score 2-5: bandits on the road ► **674**

score 6-8: howls in the darkness ► **496**

score 9-12: Charon demands a toll ► **341**

95

☐☐☐☐

Put a tick in one of the boxes. If four boxes are now ticked ► **695** immediately. If not, read on.

You manage to scoop up a **lava gem** without getting badly burned. Note it on your Adventure Sheet. You can make another attempt to get a lava gem ► **787** or leave the river of fire:

North ► **711**

West to the confluence of the Styx and the Phlegethon ► **504**

East ► **193**

South to the swamps ► **38**

96

You take the coins. ‘The gods help those who help themselves, and the dead are beyond our help. I’ll go to market so that we don’t go hungry tonight.’

Add +1 to your STRENGTH score, then ► 753

97

There is no time to get a word in – you were about to point out that you were suffering from blood poisoning and that you'd make a very unpleasant meal indeed, but the lamia is ferociously fast.

Her eyes blaze with bloodlust and she rakes you with her filthy, taloned nails that are like needles of black iron.

'Oho,' she cries, 'what a delicious meal you're going to be!'

If you were already wounded ► **69**

If not ► **467**

98

As your attention is on the spiders up on the eaves of the temple roof, you fail to notice the ones silently creeping up on you from behind. They leap upon you before you have time to think. ► 159

99

Your thigh wound has weakened you too much, and Trapjaw is upon you. His claws rip apart your good leg, and you collapse in a heap. And then he begins to feed you, still alive, into the snapping jaws of his chest, broken legs first. You struggle but you are too weak, and you watch in horror as your legs are devoured right in front of your own face. Mercifully, death comes as soon as his hideous jaws close around your torso, bursting your liver and heart. After such a horrible death, perhaps the gods will take pity on you.

► **111**

100

If you have a **baby in a basket** stored here or on your Adventure Sheet ► 625. If not, read on.

You have been gifted a dwelling in Elysium, also known as the Isle of the Blessed. It is a lovely little house in the only place in Hades where the sun shines, even if it is a fake, magical sun in a pocket dimension.

You have a few vases filled with flowers of Elysium. Although black and veined in red, they look quite fetching and the air is filled with a not unpleasant scent, a welcome relief from the smell of decay and death that pervades elsewhere.

ITEMS STORED HERE

Anyway, here you can relax, rest and heal yourself if you are wounded (untick your Wound box, if ticked). You can also store items or money or retrieve them, as you wish. Simply write them in the box or add them to your sheet. Don't forget to cross them off your Adventure Sheet or store when depositing/making a withdrawal. However, you cannot store the **sceptre of Agamemnon** if you have it; it must remain with you.

When you are ready to move on, if you have the codeword ***Nullify*** and do *not* have ***Neutralised*** ► 241

Otherwise ► 10

101

The throne room of Hades is a long hall hewn out of living rock. Its walls are rugged grey granite, but lined with black marble pillars inlaid with silver filigree. Black and silver drapes hang on the walls; the ceiling is painted with stars, as if you were looking up at a midnight sky; the floor is a black and white mosaic depicting various underworld scenes – Cerberus guarding the gates, Charon ferrying souls across the Styx, a tribunal judging the dead, the Furies punishing the guilty, other shades taking their ease in the paradise of Elysium and so on. Jewel-encrusted iron lanterns hang from the ceiling, filling the place with a pale brightness.

At one end rests a double throne made of shining ebony but there is no one sitting upon it. The hall is deserted, for all the Olympian gods save Vulcan are sleeping. Not even a lowly shade is to be seen. It is as quiet as… well, the grave. At the far end, double doors lead out of the throne room. Behind the throne, you see a strange-looking plinth, like a sundial.

► **143**

102

If you have the codeword ***Namesake*** ► 388 immediately. If not, read on.

You return to the two philosophers, Plota and Sacrotes. As you draw near, you overhear their conversation.

‘He called it the Republic!’ says Sacrotes.

‘No way – mine was called the Philosopher King with the three classes and everything!’ says Plota.

‘What a rip off. And it all rests on the words of the fake Sacrotes.’

‘Socrates, you mean,’ says Plota.

‘Yes, that utter fraud!’

‘They stole our lives!’ The conversation continues in this bitter vein.

If you have **Zeno’s arrow** ► 37

If not, there is nothing you can do here, and you return to the bar ► 465

103

You present the innkeeper with the **blessed soil of Arcadia**. Cross it off your Adventure Sheet. Delete the codeword ***Nature*** and gain the codeword ***Nurture***.

The innkeeper is overjoyed. Her spectral face seems to light up, despite it consisting mostly of shadow and mist.

‘Thank you,’ she cries, ‘Now the white poplars will flourish and my inn will be blessed. Look, Anchises.’ And she shows the soil to the drunk at the bar.

‘Uhh…’ he grunts. He turns to you and says, ‘I had a son, you know. Aeneas. Bet you’ve heard of him? His mum was a goddess, oh yes, I slept with Aphrodite you know.’

‘Enough, old fool,’ says the innkeeper. She turns to you, ‘Welcome to my inn, my name is Helen.’.

‘What? Not the Helen, you know, of Troy?’ you ask.

‘Don’t be ridiculous, of course not. Look at me, by Hera! No, when I was alive I started a franchise of inns in Athens. Helen Hotels, premier inn amongst inns, I called them. Did so well, I opened up in Corinth, Megara, and Thebes too. Everyone called me Helen because, well, I literally slept around, metaphorically speaking. You know, in different inns, not with... Anyway, it’s not my real name, but I can’t remember that now in any case. And then I ended up in Hades. What was I going to do here? Sure as eggs is eggs, open up an inn. Maybe one day, I’ll have ‘em all over the Vulcanverse, but for now, I’m stuck in Hades. Anyway, you can stay here free, anytime you like.’

► **465**

104

You manage to keep up a solid rhythm of dodge, riposte, dodge, riposte, until you have shredded the bramble beast into a twitching pile of weeds and leaves. You stare in horror as it begins to re-assemble itself, but it gives you enough time to make it into the pavilion at the centre of the garden.

► **370**

105

Agamemnon finishes his speech. The crowd of shades begin to disperse, muttering amongst themselves as they are herded away by spectral soldiers. Agamemnon and Orestes step down and move off down a walkway lined with statues of famous musicians and playwrights of old Greece. You follow and they lead you to a palace built in an antique style of old Mycenae and Crete. Agamemnon and his son disappear inside. Warrior shades stand guard at the entrance.

You scout out the palace. You have three options: try and sneak onto the roof and find a way in from there, brazen your way through the front door, or simply attack the guards.

Attack them ► **694**

Climb onto the roof ► **174**

Bamboozle the guards ► **822**

106

You move forward through darkness, as if you were wading through water, although you can see well enough. Up ahead, you can make out some kind of royal chamber with a dais upon which is a great throne of black marble, inlaid with gold stars, Upon it sits... something. It is in the form of a human female but huge and swathed in what looks like night itself. Her voluminous robes and shrouded cowl are like wisps of star-studded shadow, tentacles of starry darkness. You cannot see her face, but a soft glow, like starlight, radiates from within. She is Nyx, and she is night.

Before her two figures stand. One is black-winged, black-bearded, black-robed, and with eyes like black steel. A sword is girt at his waist and he wears a wreath of blood-red poppies on his head. Your soul recognizes him immediately – it is Thanatos, he whose touch is death, and whose heart is iron.

Beside him stands his brother, Hypnos, he whose breath is sleep and whose words are dreams. He too is winged, and bearded, with a wreath of bright red poppies on his head, but his robes and beard are white and inviting, like bedsheets. His eyes are like pale portals into a world of dreams.

They appear to be discussing something. You hear snatches of conversation, their voices like a tickling whisper in your head, felt rather than heard.

'Daedalus must be ours. Of all men, he must do our bidding.'

'I have the soul of his son in a cage. He will follow our command.'

'And the gods still sleep, all is well.'

Suddenly Thanatos stiffens. 'Wait, I hear the flutter of a mortal soul!'

'What – here? How?' says Nyx.

If you have the codeword ***Restore*** ► **100** in *Workshop of the Gods*. If not, read on.

How are you able to see? If it's by means of **phoenix tears** rubbed into your eyes ► **420**

If it's anything else ► **372**

107

The entrance to the tomb of Pelops is a large stone door with a marble portico covered in friezes depicting Pelops' accomplishments – winning chariot races, serving Poseidon, founding the Olympic Games, ruling the Peloponnesus (named for him). You look for a way of opening it, but a soft push is enough and the door opens as if on recently oiled hinges and you step inside. Ahead, a large frieze-carved sarcophagus rests in the centre of a circular chamber. The walls are painted with more scenes from the life of Pelops. It is a fine tomb.

Suddenly the door slams shut behind you and the room is plunged into absolute darkness.

'Hah, you fool,' Tantalus crows from the other side of the portal. 'You think I would share the golden dog or anything of mine with a worthless worm like you? No, you will fester and die in there, a suitable companion in death for my burdensome and rebellious son. I, though, am free. Free!'

His last cry fades on the wind as he scampers away. You test the door. It appears to have been barred from the outside.

► **365**

108

If you have the codeword ***Nettle*** ► **536** immediately. If not, read on.

You approach what looks like a regular ancient Greek hairdressers, even if it is in Hades, fully equipped and everything. At the front a ghostly figure lounges in a chair, looking bored.

As you draw near, the shade mutters, almost to himself, ‘Welcome to my barber shop, I’m Davides.’ Then he looks at you, and suddenly his spectral face lights up.

‘You’re alive! You’ve got real hair and nails, and everything. Please, I beg you let me do your hair for you!’ He grabs one of your hands. ‘And these nails, look at the state of them – is that blood? Anyway, I can pare them for you, they’ll look like new.’

If you have the codeword ***Passion*** ► **457** immediately. If not, read on.

Do you want a haircut?

Say yes, and take a seat ► **682**

Say no, and leave ► **75**

109

You fall back, badly wounded. The lamia, hungry and unable to control her greed, pauses to lick your blood off her iron-black talons. You realise you are out classed, and take the opportunity to turn tail and run for your life.

She howls in rage – ‘No, come back here, delicious thing! Your blood is sooooo good!’ and she gives chase, writhing after you.

You stagger on, holding your wound, looking behind you in horror. She is slithering along as fast as her serpentine body can propel her. Which is slightly faster than your two legs can carry you, wounded as you are. She is slowly gaining on you.

‘Davora must feed,’ she cries, ‘Give it up, it’ll all be over before you can say Hecate, Hera and Hermes!’

You flee into the grey wilderness, but still she comes. You will have to think of something.

Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **823**

Fail ► **255**

110

You lead them to that forgotten corner of the underworld where there is an ancient graveyard, a long abandoned temple to Hades and, behind that, the stables where the winged chariot is stored. You and the three shades climb into the chariot, hitch up the bronze bulls and, using the reins, command the bulls to pull the chariot out of the stable shed. The chariot's wings spread wide, the bulls, snorting fire and steam, begin a hammering gallop, and then the chariot soars skyward. You sweep over Hades below.

Lampeto screams in delight – as far as someone who has been dead for longer than you've been alive can scream in delight that is. After a while, you descend into the mountains of Boreas.

'Thank you, my saviour,' says Lampeto, resting a ghostly hand on your shoulder. 'As I am – or at least once was – a Queen of the Amazons, I dub thee my champion!'

Note the title **Queen's Champion** on your Adventure Sheet.

Lampeto says her farewells. 'We will find a place here, but then you must come back to me. There is more work we can do together. The more you aid me, the greater will your final reward, trust me!' With that, the three shades disappear into mountains and are gone. From here, you can either:

Return to Hades ► **673**

Alight in Boreas ► **222** in *The Pillars of the Sky*

111

Vague memories crowd your head but you cannot bring them forth. You struggle to recall your purpose, even your name. Emptiness fills you. Your limbs are but tendrils of wispy shadow. You have died, and your shade is condemned to walk the tenebrous halls of Hades for all eternity. But wait… weren't you already in Hades? What has happened?

A bright light blinds you and a voice, the voice of Vulcan, lord of these four realms, fills your head. 'Pitiful though you are, the fate of this world depends on you. But Zeus only knows why we picked someone like you but there you are. By our command, Thanatos will not come for you. Instead, you will be returned to the world, but you will have to give up your worldly possessions, they cannot go with you although there is a way for you to retrieve them later. For now, I will send you to my vault in Hades. Oh, and try not to get yourself killed this time, eh?'

► **444**

112

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there is a tick in the box already, ► 717 immediately**.** If not, read on.

A soul-chilling wind blows up, and you draw your cloak around you, shuddering, not just from the cold, but from the faint sound of far-off screaming that accompanies the wind. Ahead, you spot one of the many houses of the dead that litter these darkling plains – but this one is a little different. As you draw near, you see that it is an old, crumbling farmhouse, a pale shadow of an earthly original.

There is a broken well in the forecourt of the farmhouse. You can just make out a word burned into a ragged signpost at the entrance. It says '*Execratos*'. What will you do:

Investigate the farmhouse ► 56

Move on ► 412

113

‘Eh? A talking butterfly? What the…And floating and stinging, what nonsense is this? You think Trapjaw’s bite is but a bee sting? Is that it? Hah, I’ll eat your heart for that!’ says Trapjaw, the daemon in the dark.

In the time he has taken to say those words, the butterfly’s light has grown. In its ruby glow you can make out a hideous form. The head is human-like, but pale grey with three short sharp horns on either side of its hairless skull, red glowing eyes, fangs, claws – and massive, snapping jaws of bone where its chest should be.

The butterfly shines brightly, its flickering ruby light bathing the tomb and Trapjaw in an incongruous rosy glow.

Trapjaw of the crypts of darkness. A hideous monstrosity from the depths of hell indeed. Trapjaw hisses, and puts a taloned hand over his eyes, momentarily blinded.

Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **481**

Fail ► **229**

114

You take your aunt’s hand and lead her out of the open doorway. The horizon seems to call to you. Across the fields and the vineyards, over the streams and forests, up into the blue hills and beyond. That is where your destiny will lead you. Without looking back you start to run, filled with the exhilaration of the world that is spread around you.

‘Go, fierce one,’ calls your aunt, her words almost lost in the wind. ‘You’ll never catch the Huntress till your dying day, but till then strive to keep her always in your sight.’

So, your god is Artemis. Write her name in the box on your Adventure Sheet and ► 769

115

The last thing you see before your vision dims is the screaming face of the ghostly girl-spirit. Will you too become a vengeful shade, doomed to wander the endless plains of Hades in search of an impossible justice? It seems not, as death in the Vulcanverse is not the same for you as it is for other mortals or so have the gods decreed. ► **111**.

116

Everything is covered in a filthy, black silt, and soon you too are filthy and stinking. There is nothing much left on the main deck, nor is there much down below. You do find an altar to Poseidon upon which rests a leather-bound scroll case, and behind that a heavy bronze chest with a massive lock on the front. The scroll case is the **journal of the Argo**. Note it on your Adventure Sheet. Inside you find an account of the adventures of Jason and the Argonauts, how they defeated Talos the iron man, Jason and Medea's tragic love, the battle with the Spartoi, the clashing rocks, their run-in with the harpies, and the capture of the Golden Fleece, amongst many other adventures. It is a fascinating read.

At the end, a note has been added by one of the Argonauts, Ancaeus. It reads, 'Jason, an old man, returned to the ship. I found him, crushed by Hera. I have locked up his goods.'

Reading the journal reveals that Ancaeus wears a bearskin and wields a double bladed axe. After you finish reading, you turn your attention to the bronze chest. Presumably this is where Ancaeus put away Jason's stuff. If you have **Jason's key** ► 665 immediately. If not, read on.

You soon find there is no way to open the armoured chest without the key, so you head back to the delta ► 493

117

You are trudging across the grey land of Hades. Ash falls like rain, sprinkling the ground with flecks of maggoty-white detritus. A gloomy miasma of melancholy pervades all, including your own heart.

There is what looks like an ancient battlefield nearby with a memorial stone at its centre of some kind. Will you go to the:

Battlefield ► **638**
Sacred Way, north west ► **474**
Sacred Way, south ► **346**
Black Bayou ► **273**
North ► **12**

118

‘Eh? I don’t understand,’ says Xenophanes.

‘Oh, I get it, it’s a device, a little machine. Though what the stuff about bees is I don’t know,’ says Aristippus.

‘Perhaps it’s the device of an assassin. It appears as a harmless butterfly but its bite is deadly poison?’ says Cleanthes, backing away.

You reassure them that it is harmless.

‘That’s good to know, but what does it mean? Why would a butterfly sting like a bee?’ asks Aspasia.

‘Is it a paradoxical proposition to make us consider the idea that beauty is only skin deep and can hide a multitude of sins?’ muses Protagoras?

And so they descend into a debate about beauty and sin.

There is nothing more for you here. You grab the butterfly and take your leave.

► **144**

119

The baby in a basket you found on the river Styx is no more. It is now a young man. Astonished at the rate the baby has grown to manhood, you are even more amazed when he speaks.

‘Hello, parent or really I should say foster parent. Thank you for giving me a home and looking after me.’

You shrug an ‘it was the least I could do’ shrug (and it was the least).

The young man continues. ‘I am Deucalion, the son of the titan Prometheus, who created mankind from clay and gave them fire and so enraged the gods. For many years now, my father has been chained to a rock deep in Tartarus where a giant eagle feeds on his liver, only for it to regrow ready for the next day’s torment. The gods are cruel.’

You nod, for they are.

‘I have to free my father,’ Deucalion goes on, ‘and that means descending into Tartarus. I intend to hazard the task, but I hope you will come with me for it will be dangerous indeed and you have protected me thus far. If you decide to help, meet me at the sinkhole in the ground, west of the Acheron bridge. Together we will try and free the creator of mankind.’

With that, Deucalion leaves your house. Cross off the **baby in a basket** from your Adventure Sheet or your home storage. Gain the codeword ***Nibble***. Now turn to the section number written in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet.

120

You throw the **fresh fish** to one side of the chamber. Cross it off your Sheet. There are no fish in this part of the river, and the maggots sense its freshness, a welcome respite from an unending diet of dead flesh. They swarm *en masse*, fighting amongst themselves in their desire to feed upon the fish, leaving you an easy way out of the chamber. You run past following the river tunnel onward. ► **589**

121

The dismal grey skies of Hades blanket the land in gloom and you can almost taste the misery of dashed hopes on the air itself. You are trudging across the endless grey, in between the Delta of Darkness to the west, and the Slimeswamp to the east. To the north, a bridge across the river Styx leads towards the city of the dead.

Go east to the Slimeswamp ► **25**
Cross the bridge to the north ► **145**
Go south to the Sacred Way ► **306**
Head west to the delta ► **493**

122

‘Aieee, it’s the kraken – again – and this time look at the size of it!’

It is truly massive, still not yet fully grown but as big as the *Shadow on the Waters* itself. It rises up to tower over the barge. You think that perhaps this is the end, but then it makes a deep rumbling chirrup, almost like a bird, as if in greeting. Gently it lays some **fresh fish** at your feet with a tentacle, before returning to the depths of the river. It appears, somehow, that the kraken remembers you fondly.

‘Thank Poseidon for that,’ says the bargeman in his hollow, ghostly voice. Where to now?

Disembark and east ► **51**
Disembark and south-west ► **228**
Disembark and north-west ► **273**
Continue upriver by barge ► **364**

123

You start things off by loudly and slowly calling upon Apollo of the silver tongue for inspiration. Then you sing a couple of epic poems about Agamemnon and the Trojan war.

The minotaur begins to huff and puff a bit.

And then you begin to tell the tale of your adventures, from your first steps through the Gates of Hades, to a baby in a basket you found whilst on a barge on the river Styx, and everything else between.

‘Fascinating, but I’m trying to sleep, here’ protests the silver minotaur. You ignore his pleas, and once you’ve finished your tale you start again from the beginning once more, Deucalion loudly egging you on.

‘Please, no,’ begs the silver face, ‘Can’t you just die in silence?’

‘I’m afraid not,’ you say, I’m going to keep this up for as long as I can.’

‘There is another way to be rid of us,’ hints Deucalion.

The silver minotaur heaves a great, whistling sigh. ‘All right, all right! I’ll let you through, just never bother me again. And don’t tell – you know, them.’

With that, the great iron doors swing open, and you both step through. Deucalion claps you on the shoulder with a grin. ‘Well done,’ he says.

► 394

124

You manage to hit your targets, creating a couple of lines across, one to hold onto, another to walk on. Gingerly, you shuffle your way across the River of Stars, making sure you don’t look down into the endless abyss of space. After a stomach churning climb, you make it over to Elysium, the Isle of the Blessed.

► **479**

125

The tower is a tall pillar of begrimed granite, decaying, dilapidated and ancient. Who could have built it, you wonder? As you draw near, you hear a raucous cawing and shrieking, as of nails scraped down a blackboard and broadcast through a speaking trumpet. It is an awful sound. Out of the top of the tower a dark cloud rises up – a flock of dire birds. They swoop down *en masse*, rushing at you, wings flapping, beaks snapping and talons clacking.

They are strixes, black, crow-like birds but with enlarged talons and beaks of sharpened copper. They like nothing more than to slice open the flesh of their prey and drink their blood. Eyeballs are a particular delicacy for them too. What will you do?

Run for your life ► **760**

Fight for your life ► **70**

126

The paths that wend their way through the houses of the dead seem deserted. You find nothing else of interest in the Mourning Fields and decide to return to the city.

- ► **10**

127

You step into the oleaginous waters, ready for a little swim. In the inky black waters of a lake filled with who knows what. In murky water that you cannot see through. In hell.

The shade on the barge shouts in a raspy, long dead voice, ‘What are you doing? Are you mad?’

Will you:

Go swimming anyway ► **13**

Approach the barge ► **192**

Leave the area ► **796**

128

The spiderling sniffs the air. ‘I’ll find you, and then I’ll give you Arachne’s kiss!’

You press yourself back into the shadows.

Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **209**

Fail ► **487**

129

It charges straight at you, eyes fixed on your throat, howling. You are facing an underworld nightmare, Wolfshadow, demon wolf of Hades.

You'll have to fight it. Attempt a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **202**

Fail ► **295**

130

You walk through the entrance of the Necromanteion. Above the door, these words are carved:

‘Hades, snatcher of all things, shall lay his hands upon thee.’

You find yourself in a dark corridor, dimly lit by lanterns on the wall. As you walk down it, under each lantern, you see that more quotes have been carved:

‘No man takes to Hades all his great wealth.’

‘The descent to Hades is the same from every place.’

‘The boundaries which divide life and death are shadowy and vague. Who shall say where the one ends and the other begins?’

‘Pale death beats equally at the poor man’s gate as at the palaces of kings.’

The corridor opens out into a large chamber the walls of which are hung with black drapes. A white marble altar stands in the middle of the room; two big incense burners on either side of it fill the air with a sweet, drowsy scent. Behind the altar, two statues of Hades and Persephone sitting on their thrones are carved out of ebony. They are works of exquisite verisimilitude.

A plaque affixed to the altar explains that you if you leave an offering on the altar, announce your name and lineage, you will hear the prophecies of the ancient dead. Will you:

Leave an offering of 10 pyr ► **740**

Leave the area ► **610**

131

Polykephales parries your strike with its snake tail, sending you sprawling back. Then, with a triumphant cry, a second head regenerates itself and bursts out of its neck, snarling at you. This could take a while. As you get to your feet, the other head bites at you, you'll have to parry and riposte if you can. Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **672**

Fail ► **304**

132

‘Who – or perhaps – what, are you?’ you ask.

‘I am Zoë,’ says the golden maiden in an echoing voice, ‘the daughter of Midas, accidentally turned to gold by him but also cursed to live, despite that. And now I am tasked to guard the tomb of my father, forever. The question is, who are you?’

‘Oh just a curious adventurer,’ you say airily.

‘If you try and steal anything, I will crush your skull like a grape,’ she says, clenching one golden fist.

‘Don’t you tire of your task?’ you ask.

‘Oh yes, it has been many centuries now, I would like nothing more than to be released from my task. I yearn for oblivion, for death.’

‘Well, I’m sure I could oblige,’ you say, hefting your weapon.

‘No, you fool, I am made of the noblest of metals, solid, dense with gold. Nothing can harm me save perhaps the fires of the volcano of death itself, but I cannot leave here. I am compelled to protect this tomb by the very gold that keeps me alive.’

Will you:

Attack anyway ► 296

Offer to help another way ► 520

Leave this place ► 76

133

A terrible howl fills the gloomy half-light of Hades. It chills your blood for you recognize that sound. It is the undead demon creature, Wolfshadow. Dread grips your heart for you remember what they say about him – those who hear his howl are doomed…. And there he is, on the other side of the bridge, running towards you! How did he find you? You also recall that he is invulnerable. You have no choice but to throw him off the scent somehow.

If you have any of **honey of Hades**, **weasel blood**, a **caged canary**, **fresh fish**, **a harpy's egg**, a **centaur's skull**, **venison sausages**, some **strix stew** or a **shrivelled heart** and wish to discard it ► **5**

If not, you have to make a run for it ► **436**

134

As you peer into the clouds of steam, ash and burning droplets, you see something emerging from the smoky depths – a vast, bulky form! Blubberjaw himself. His body is a swollen mass of maggoty obesity, encased in heavy chains to keep the rolls of fatty flesh from spilling out and around. Atop that mass is a one-eyed head with an enormous maw that yawns open at the sight of you. A foul, wriggling tongue skitters out towards you, tasting the air. The whole mass is wreathed in flame, burning but not consuming him. If you were to fall into his adipose embrace, you would be cooked in moments, ready to be gobbled up.

You notice that some of his chains run off to the side, where several screaming victims are attached, soon to be cooked in the flaming morass of fat that is his embrace before being eaten. Presumably one of them is Lampeto.

You could try to talk Blubberjaw into giving you what you want, either by convincing him or bribing him in some way. Or you could simply attack and hope to get what you want through force of arms. Or perhaps you can come up with some clever ploy. Will you try to:

Talk ► **342**
Attack ► **203**
Trick ► **476**

135

The river has vomited up a deluge of noxious mud from the bottom of the river. It rains down all over the barge, covering you in foul, stinking slime.

The bargeman guffaws. ‘Makes no difference to me, I haven’t smelt anything since I died, and Athena knows how long ago that was.’

You, however, have a very good sense of smell, and now you stink as you’ve never stunk before. Note that you have **stink x 1**. Your next CHARM roll is at −1. After that is resolved, the smell wears off, and you can cross the ‘item’ off.

Where to now?

Disembark and east ► **51**
Disembark and south-west ► **228**
Disembark and north-west ► **273**
Continue upriver by barge ► **364**

136

Hydna punts the *Threnody* down a small waterway through a swampy morass of twisted foliage until it opens out in another hidden lake, in the middle of which are three hills. The first has a man heaving and sweating his way up one side whilst rolling a heavy boulder up to the top.

‘These are some of the terrible punishments the gods exact for our temerity,’ says Hydna. ‘There is Sisyphus, forever cursed. When he finally gets that rock up to the top, it will fall down again, and once more must he strain and struggle to lift it up. He’s been doing that for an age.’

‘What was his crime?’

‘He cheated death for a while, the lot of all mortals, but even worse in the eyes of the gods, he claimed to be more cunning and intelligent than Zeus. The gods hate hubris above all things.’

The next hill has a burning wheel at the top, slowly turning. On it a man is tied, never dying, never consumed by the flames just suffering the torments of fire. Forever.

‘What an awful fate – what was his crime?’ you ask.

‘That is Ixion. He burned his father in law to death. But that wasn’t his greatest crime. He tried to ravish Hera, the queen of the gods. He managed to both offend the gods as a kin-slayer and then anger white-armed Hera and her husband, Zeus the Thunderer.’

‘Why would you risk the wrath of the gods like that?’ you ask with a shake of the head.

‘Some say he was mad.’

The last hill has a man chained to the top. On either side, great bronze gongs ring out, giving off a deafening, thundering sound. ‘That is Salmoneus,’ says Hydna, ‘once a king, and brother to Sisyphus. He made a bridge of bronze, across which he drove a chariot, thus making a booming, thunderous sound. And so he claimed that he was Zeus the Thunderer and should be worshipped and that the other was an impostor who did not even exist.’

‘Seems legit...’

‘As you can imagine, Zeus struck him with a thunderbolt thus proving that he did indeed exist, and then chained him down here, to suffer eternal cacophonous thunder. Every night his ear drums regenerate.’

‘The gods are cruel,’ you say.

‘They are indeed,’ replies Hydna. ‘And that concludes our tour of cruel

and unusual punishments!’

‘Well, thank you, another fascinating tour,’ you say. Will you:

Try to free one of them ► **348**

Make your farewells ► **796**

137

Helen has granted you free use of the Inn of the White Poplars. You can stay here, rest and heal up. Untick your Wound box, if you are wounded. You look around. In one corner, the shade of a bard, playing a lyre, is singing a song. In another, two ghostly forms are in deep discussion. There is a new barkeep, as Helen is elsewhere in the Vulcanverse, setting up a new inn. The new barkeep welcomes you in a thin reedy voice. ‘I was a librarian once, in old Iskandria, but now I run a bar in Hades,’ he says.

You can buy and sell a few things here at the following prices:

	To buy	*To sell*
strix stew	20 pyr	15 pyr
pomegranate wine	–	35 pyr
honey cake	–	50 pyr

When you are done, you can:

Listen to the bard ► **160**

Talk to the shades in the corner ► **475**

Leave and head north ► **346**

Leave and head to the delta ► **493**

138

You are resolved. You bring the sceptre down across your knee, and it cracks in two easily, surprisingly so. There is a burst of energy, a black cloud of night that dissipates into the air. The two halves fall at your feet where they crumble into dust.

‘Noooo…’ wails Agamemnon. He staggers, as does his son. The dark energy that animated them dissipates too. They seem to shrivel up in front of you, becoming ancient shades of the dead once more. They stare at you, a look of empty, forgotten despair on their phantasmal faces.

‘What now, father?’ mutters Orestes.

‘I am a father? I can’t recall… what was I? Did we…. Ah, so much is lost, so much...’

They turn, and shuffle away, sad lonely figures. You follow. Outside, all of his followers, his army of the dead, have also fallen into emptiness, reverting to ancient shades wandering the gloomy halls of Hades. Agamemnon’s rule is over.

► **404**

139

You wake with a start from a dream in which a large red-furred rat had eaten all of the food in your house. You shake the cobwebs of sleep away and look around.

You are beside a now smouldering campfire, on the shores of Lake Cocytus. The girl, Orphea is nowhere to be seen... You reach for your backpack – and your worst fears are confirmed. All your money has been stolen! That thieving little... Wait, she has left a note. It reads:

'Thank you for everything, but I am what I am, and they don't call me Lady Rapscallion for nothing! You did save my life though, so I'm only taking the money, and leaving you all the other stuff, weird and wonderful though some of it is. See ya!

'Orphea, aka Lady Rapscallion.'

Cross all your money off your Adventure Sheet and gain the codeword ***Naughty***. Cursing under your breath, you vow to get her back for this, one day. For now you can do little more than move on.

► **586**

140

‘Oh come now! You would have me loot the tomb of my own son? I am grateful, you may take what you wish, but please, do not make me go in. Year upon year have I looked upon the suffering of my daughter, must I look upon my dead son too?’

Insist upon it ► **190**

Go yourself ► **107**

141

You step into the shadows. A lit torch, set into a bracket on the wall, throws a dim light across your path. In the flickering flame you see you are in the portico of the tomb. A lit torch? Is this tomb inhabited somehow?

You suck in your breath as you notice a body on the floor, but it is long, long dead, the skeletal remains of an adventurer like yourself perhaps. Its head is missing but one bony finger still points at some words daubed in blood on the wall:

'These are the crypts of darkness. Flee, you fool!'

Will you:

Enter the crypts ► **439**

Flee! ► **193**

142

‘All right,’ you say. ‘I’ll help. I presume he’s down there somewhere,’ and you point at the great hole in the ground, nearby. From it wafts an unpleasant odour, like nothing you have ever smelt before. You can also hear the faint sounds of screaming or perhaps it is the whistling of the wind, you are not sure. Anyway, short of jumping to your certain death, there seems to be no way of getting down there.

‘Yes, down there in the deep, dark depths, my father is chained to a rock.’

‘Well... how do we get down?’ you ask.

Deucalion reaches into his backpack, takes out two light blue sweets and hands you one of them.

‘Soft-drops,’ he says. We can jump down safely with these.’

‘What?’ you reply in disbelief.

‘Suck on one of these, and just before you hit the ground, the magic candy will soften your fall, so its like you just walked off a step on some stairs.’

You narrow your eyes. ‘Who gave you these,’ you say.

‘My mother, the nymph, Hesione,’ says Deucalion. Shall we?’ he says, indicating the deep, dark hole out of which comes a foul stench and the shrieks of the damned.

Jump into a hole that you can’t see the bottom of ► **741**

Hand the sweet back and leave – you can always come back later ► **234**

143

□

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 278 immediately. If not, read on.

As you take a closer look at the throne, you notice something gleaming in the pallid light on the floor, as if dropped or discarded. It is a **silver seal of Hades**. Those who bear his seal may leave the underworld freely. It is not meant for the living but the shades of the dead, and is not given out lightly. Note it on your Adventure Sheet.

Will you:

Leave via the double doors ► 213
Sit on the throne ► 54
Investigate the ‘sun dial’ ► 200

144

You are at the foothills of the necropolis, near the Garden of Persephone. Will you go:

To the garden ► 640
East towards Vulcan City ► 325
West to the necropolis ► 696
South towards the Styx ► 330
North-west to the river ► 821

145

You have come to an ancient stone bridge that spans the river Styx. Runes carved into the grey granite tell you that it is called the Bridge of Hate. A crimson coloured moss clings to the old stone, so that it looks as if it has been bespattered with blood. Or at least you think it is moss…

Below the bridge, the river Styx flows sluggishly, its waters black as night. In places, the black waters are so polished, a man might see his face in them. There is a black and silver barge moored nearby.

Cross the bridge ► 94

Approach the barge ► 217

146

Your own hand feels cold as clay as you lay the coins on your father’s eyes.

‘Charon row you swift to your rest, father. We can see to ourselves if we know your spirit is safe with the Lord of Plenty.’

Mark 1 Glory on your Adventure Sheet. Your neighbours hear of and remember the sacrifice you made on this night, and their stories are the seed from which your reputation grows.

► **753**

147

Death Dealer beats you back, and you think you are doomed, but when you realise that he's trying to take you alive, and is holding back from a killer blow, you are able to make some risky counterattacks or two. You manage to land a blow that twists his helm down over his face, blinding him momentarily. You are not holding back, so you hack him down mercilessly. He falls to the ground. The black vultures in the sky give a caw of dismay and fly away. Horse and rider begin to dissolve in front of your very eyes, fading into dust. You hear a faint ghostly voice on the wind, 'I, like you, cannot be so easily slain, mortal hero…'

You sigh. Sounds like he'll be back. Gain the codeword ***Nemesis***. Time to move on.

You are travelling on the Sacred Way in the southern parts of Hades. Above you, the endless grey skies blanket the land in a gloomy miasma of despair. From here you can go:

North along the Sacred Way ► **474**
South along the Sacred Way ► **579**
East, inland ► **228**
North-east, inland ► **117**

148

You recall that this is where Orphea, that impudent thief, mocked and taunted you before running off. She is long gone now though. Grinding your teeth and thinking vengeful thoughts, you continue on to the Sacred Way in the north-west of the underworld. A cold wind blows off the ocean to the west. It is actually quite refreshing as the winds of Hades are usually redolent with death, decay and despair. To the north, the way ends. You cannot get into the mountains of Boreas from here for the veil of the shadow of death that surrounds the underworld prevents all travel into and out of Hades, save through its two great gates. However, there is also a range of northern mountains that are within the realm of the dead.

Nearby, you see a tumulus of some kind, an ancient burial mound, a not unexpected sight here in Hades, but this one seems especially old. From here, you can go:

- North to the mountains ► 226
- South along the Sacred Way ► 346
- North-east, inland ► 12
- South-east, inland ► 117
- To the burial mound ► 550

149

One of the Furies notices you. She flies down, hissing and spitting with angry bile, to alight nearby.

‘Sisters!’ she screams. ‘It is the kin-slayer, who slew their own brother!’

Another comes down to alight beside her.

‘Helpful of them to come to us, saving us a trip.’

You prepare your weapon as the third arrives – is it even possible to fight the Furies? Perhaps you are about to find out, but then the third says:

‘Wait, this one is still alive!’

‘Alive, here in our own house?’ says the second.

‘We cannot touch them, even here,’ says the third.

‘Hades wither your heart, mortal,’ says the first, ‘Hurry up and die, so we can mete out the punishment you deserve.’

With that the Furies fly back to their business with a curse and a threat or two, but that is all.

There is little you can do here. You can hardly free everyone, nor should you perhaps, without knowing their crimes and it would not be prudent to take on the Furies, no matter how heroic you are. All you can do is return to the surface or descend deeper into the dark for at the other end of the chamber is a stairway leading down into the depths.

Go back up ► 8

Go down ► 577

150

Write the number **795** in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet (in place of the number already written there, if any) and then ►**568**

151

You step into the chamber of the Fates, the Moirai. And there they are, all three of them, before you. Immediately in your heart you seem to know who and what they are – Lachesis sings the things that were, Clotho the things that are, and Atropos the things that will be.

One of the Fates sits at a chair, weaving the threads of destiny on her spindle, she is Clotho the Spinner. As she weaves, she hands threads to Lachesis, Disposer of Lots, who is dressed in white and measures each thread on a podium. Thus is a mortal's destiny decided.

And then there is the third Fate, sitting at a low table – Atropos the Inexorable, who wields a pair of shears and cuts the thread of life. They speak in low, portentous voices, laden with doom.

'You are the hero of this age and therefore we cannot –' says Clotho.

'– be sure of your destiny, unlike lesser mortals, though we know it will be one of three – ' continues Lachesis.

' – possible outcomes, and you must choose wisely but at the end it will all come down to the roll of the cosmic dice,' finishes Atropos, 'and even we cannot know that score.'

Clotho points to the other end of the chamber, where another stairwell leads down into the depths.

'That leads to Erebus, where the titan, night-cowled Nyx and her sons, Thanatos the undoer and ever-dreaming Hypnos reside,' says white-robed Lachesis.

'Do not enter there if you are not ready,' says Atropos.

If you have some **honey cake** ► 61

If not, ► 366

152

If you have the codeword ***Perdition*** ► 267 immediately. If not, read on.

You step through the portal of the tomb. Inside it is empty and as quiet as the grave. Well, as quiet as a grave in the lands of the living, obviously, not a grave in Hades, but still, there is nothing. A trick of the wind perhaps? After all, the sounds of sobbing and crying are everywhere in the Mourning Fields. You leave the tomb. Will you:

Visit the baths ► 182
Explore further ► 26
Leave the fields ► 10

153

‘Ah, the twelve great labours. The gods, in their dreams it seems, and made real by Hypnos, have decreed twelve great labours to be undertaken by a heroic adventurer, three in each of the quadrants. The three labours of Hades are to fetch the tapestry of Arachne, find the lost wings of Icarus, and to gather some pomegranate seeds.

‘Do you know where these things are?’ you ask.

‘No, not directly, but I do know that Persephone, Queen of the Underworld, grew magic pomegranate trees in her garden, that there is a temple to Arachne in the Slimeswamp, and that Daedalus once had a workshop somewhere near the Plains of Howling Darkness, and he built the wings for his son Icarus – wait, that’s two questions you have asked me!’

‘Indeed, and you answered the second freely, so there can be no extra charge.’

‘Bah, a technicality!’ he says.

‘True, nevertheless,’ you reply with a shrug.

He sighs. ‘Ah well. Another question then?’

► **198** and choose again.

154

With an almost human-like rumbling moan of disappointment the great beast sinks back down into the waters. The bargeman shade heaves a sigh of relief, as do you. Where to now?

Disembark and east ► 51
Disembark and South-west ► 228
Disembark and North-west ► 273
Continue upriver by barge ► 364

155

If you have the codeword ***Newhouse*** or ***Nimbus*** ► **566** immediately. If not, read on.

If you have the codeword ***Night*** ► **390** immediately. If not, read on.

You have come to the great hall of the Palace. Rhadamanthus is still behind his desk, fussing over paperwork.

‘Have you thrown that traitorous usurper Agamemnon out of Elysium yet?’ he asks.

‘Not yet, but I’m on it,’ you reply.

‘Well, hurry up,’ he mutters waving a hand at you dismissively.

There are three exits here – back the way you came, to the throne room or to a stairwell heading down. Will you:

Leave ► **10**

Go to the throne room ► **708**

Head to the stairs ► **163**

156

What heart would not be melted by the kiss of the goddess of love, even a heart of solid gold? You watch, astonished, as Zoë begins to transform from the inside out, from gold to flesh, from precious metal to muscle, bone and blood.

And now a handsome young woman stands before you. Zoë gapes in amazement, examining her hands, her feet, her arms. Then she looks up at you.

‘Thank you, thank you!’ she cries, now in a rather soft voice more like a muted oboe than an entire brass section. She runs up to you and gives you a hug. ‘I shall be forever grateful to you, and to Aphrodite, queen of hearts. But I have been trapped here for so long and now it is time for me to see the world. Goodbye.’

With that she runs out of the tomb and is gone. You find yourself alone in the tomb of King Midas.

Gain the codeword ***Noble*** and ► **489**

157

‘How many pyr will it take for you to let me cross the bridge?’ you ask.

‘Pyr? What use do we have for pyr?’ replies the captain of the bridge. ‘We exist only to serve our master, Agamemnon, who we serve even in death.’

You’ll have to try something else. Will you:

Try to talk your way in ► **692**

Find another way in ► **356**

Come back later ► **10**

158

Your tour-guide, Hydna, points at a nearby beach. You can see a woman kneeling at the lake side, and filling a jug with water.

‘And there is Cleopatra!’ says Hydna.

‘What, *the* Cleopatra?’ you ask.

‘No, no, the Danaid Cleopatra – there were fifty of them, the daughters of Danaus, and they murdered their husbands on their wedding nights, as their father ordered them to. The rest of them are scattered around Hades.’

As you watch Cleopatra walk back up the shore, you see that her jug is leaking.

‘That’s their punishment, forever to fetch water that always leaks away before they can get it home. If I were her, I’d offer myself to the Hydra, that’s for sure.’

‘If you were such a hero in life, Hydna, why aren’t you in Elysium?’ you ask, pointedly.

‘Let’s just say that Cleopatra is not the first woman to murder her husband, and leave it at that, eh?’

‘Anyway,’ says Hydna, changing the subject. ‘Over there is the island of King Polykephales, ruler of the hydras.’ She points at a ring of cypress trees around the edge of a large island at the centre of a lake. ‘He makes his lair in the middle of that. And that concludes today’s tour. I hope you enjoyed your stay on the *Threnody* and will come back to travel with us once more. There are plenty more sights to see.’

‘Thank you, Hydna, most interesting,’ you say politely. Will you:

Ask her to take you to the island of King Polykephales ► **368**

Leave the Black Bayou ► **796**

159

The spiders inject their venom into you. You can feel it burning its way up your body, paralysing your limbs. You fall to the ground, unable to move. Fear and panic fill your heart as they bundle you up and submerge you in the vile waters of the swamp near a tree. You stare up through the murky waters as thin mangrave roots squirm into your body from below, feeding you with oxygen. Some days pass in paralytic horror until finally you see a swollen seed-egg over your head. Another day later, and the seed egg bursts open and a long, thin tendril slowly worms its way down to burrow into your mouth and down your throat.

You come round, days later, your body twisted and melded into that of the mangrave tree you have now become. Memories of your previous life slowly fade as you are filled with a kind of yearning rage, to feed upon mankind and to spread your seed. Not even the gods can save you from this fate, for you are not dead, merely… different. Your adventure ends here.

► **750**

160

The ghostly bard’s voice is thin and reedy, but it reverberates through the air, like a spectral echo. He plays his lyre and sings of the great battle between Typhon, king of the monsters and Zeus, king of the gods. They fought for days, Typhon hurling mountains and fireballs from his eyes, Zeus throwing thunderbolt after thunderbolt at his foe. Every time Zeus hit his foe, bits of Typhon were blown off, to fall all over the earth. Except that Typhon was said to be so big his head touched the stars, so he was able to endure such pain. Until one of Zeus’s bolts took out an eyeball. It fell into the desert, where it hit with such force that ripples of sand were blown outward from its landing place, like a rock hurled into a pond. Thus were created the Dunes of Doom. An interesting tale.

► 465

161

You remember Lampeto, the Amazon queen you rescued from never ending horror at the hands of Blubberjaw of the fiery river Phlegethon. She told you to meet her in the Asphodel Meadows. Will you go:

Looking for Lampeto ► **646**
To the house of Tiresias ► **198**
To a nearby stall ► **570**
To a small workshop ► **435**
To a barber shop ► **108**
Back to the city ► **10**

162

Your god appears to you in a vision. ‘You have succeeded in the first of the great labours of the underworld. Two more remain. A heroic effort, for which I will reward you with divine power.’

Add +1 to the attribute of your choice. Then turn to the section number written in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet.

163

A long flight of steps heads down into the basement of the palace. You walk down. Skulls line the walls and as you pass their eyes glow with a pale light, illuminating the way down. Creepy but effective. You reach the bottom.

- ► **555**

164

You hear the faint sound of a flute in the distance so you decide to move on as fast as you can. From here you can go:

East along the Sacred Way ► 72
West along the Sacred Way ► 306
North-east to the plains ► 412
North to the Slimeswamp ► 38

165

The philosophers return to their picnic. Soon they start arguing some other abstruse point. Voices are raised. Aspasia has to step in to regulate the debate, and so it goes on.

There is nothing for you to do here. You are at the foothills of the necropolis, near the Garden of Persephone. Will you go:

To the garden ► **640**
East towards Vulcan City ► **325**
West to the necropolis ► **696**
South towards the Styx ► **330**
North-west to the river ► **821**

166

You command her to surrender using the brazen trumpet. ‘What? Don’t be ridiculous, you absurd fool,’ she says as she wraps the coils of her snake body around you and sinks her fangs into your neck. Venom courses through your veins. You try to fight back but you sink into unconsciousness in moments.

► **701**

167

You have returned to the wreck of the *Argo*. It still slowly rots, as does the body of the man under the prow. You wonder where his shade is. Anyway, you have already found the **journal of the Argo** and the **Golden Fleece**. There is nothing more you can do here, so you head back to the delta.

► **493**

168

You grab the rope as if the very spirit-demons of hell were after you, which indeed they might be. You scramble up to the top pursued by the sinister crying of a ghostly child. You hurl yourself over the lip of the well to lie on the ground gasping, but thankfully nothing comes up after you. The sobbing sound fades. A grim silence falls across the old farmhouse. Well, save for the faint, wind-born screaming of the damned that is.

Time to leave this place ► 412

169

If you have the codeword ***Natron*** ► 426 immediately. If not, read on.

The river Phlegethon is a river of roiling flames, a river of Greek fire. Clouds of black smoke and steam boil up from its fiery surface. To the west, the river plunges underground but not before it reaches the Styx. That meeting of the rivers throws up vast clouds of black steam. To the east, it also dives down into the earth, presumably to the roots of the great volcano of Thanatos that you can see on the eastern horizon, slowly belching smoke. It is only this short strip of river that is above ground.

It is said that only one creature lives in this river – Blubberjaw, daemon of the flames of hell, he who feeds, whose belly is filled with fire.

If you have the codeword ***Queen*** ► 22

If not ► 787

170

If you have the codeword **Nirvana** ► 20 immediately. If not, read on.

'You did it,' exclaims Helen, 'I can't believe it!' You hand over the **silver seal of Hades**. Cross it off your Adventure Sheet and gain the codeword ***Noodles***.

'Right then, time to get on with it. I'll find my way to Arcadia. When you are ready, come and find me near the Wineries of the Nectar of the Gods. I'll look to set up near there. This could be the beginning of a great partnership.' She leaves to prepare herself. What will you do now?

Listen to the bard ► 160
Talk to Anchises ► 680
Talk to the shades in the corner ► 475
Leave and head north ► 346
Leave and head to the delta ► 493

171

As quiet as you can, you approach the cave mouth, **golden arrow of Artemis** at the ready. Suddenly, there is a banshee howl that chills your blood and out of the cave mouth hurtles Wolfshadow, hungry, as ever, to rend and chew your flesh, eyes fixed on your throat.

If you possess any kind of bow (eg a **recurve bow**) ► 23

If not ► 829

172

As you walk away, the **silver buckles** drop from your shoes and dissolve into nothingness. Cross them off your Adventure Sheet. There is nothing more you can do here except to return to the surface or descend deeper into the dark for at the other end of the chamber of the Furies is a stairway leading down into the depths.

Go back up ► 8

Go down ► 577

173

You hack at the incoming tentacle but misjudge the timing of your strike and it sends you flying across the deck. Put a tick in the Wound box. If you were already wounded, this finishes you off, and you die on the deck ► 111; otherwise read on.

The kraken rises up over the prow, ready to strike again but the spectral bargeman deftly places his punting pole between its eyes and shoves, sending it falling back into the river with a great splash. Quickly he punts the barge onward. You pick yourself up, looking behind, but the kraken has gone.

Where to now?

Disembark and east ► 51
Disembark and south-west ► 228
Disembark and north-west ► 273
Continue upriver by barge ► 364

174

You find a tree at the back of the palace, relatively out of sight. From one of its branches, you should be able to leap across to the sloping, tiled rooftop. Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **533**
Fail ► **613**

175

You drop the money into the crater (cross it off) and offer up a prayer to Thanatos, hoping for a benediction.

Thanatos hears your prayer. Gain a blessing (if you have three already, then you cannot accept this blessing). You feel rather hard done by – that is one very expensive blessing! But you think it best not to complain, in case you anger the death god.

What will you do now?

Explore the mountainside ► **644**

Leave the volcano ► **410**

176

A fair-haired man of middle age, dressed in black robes and cap, inlaid with symbols – a rod, a set of scales, a cup, and such like, says without even looking, ‘You shouldn’t be here. Get out.’

You note that this inhabitant of the underworld appears to be alive, or at least, more than just a spectral shade. You remain in place and cough. He looks up from his rather panicked fussing, an angry expression on his face, which soon changes to astonishment.

‘By Demeter’s teats, you’re alive!’ he spits. You nod. ‘Wait, you’re that mortal, the one who walks the Vulcanverse? You can help. I am Rhadamanthus, one of the judges of the dead, but with my master gone, everything is falling into chaos. Elysium is lost.’

‘Lost? How?’ you ask.

‘Haughty Agamemnon, lord of the Greeks at Troy, the child slayer, has usurped the Isle of the Blessed. He rules there now, more than a shade, a king again, though I know not from where he has drawn such power.’

‘Child slayer?’

‘He sacrificed his daughter to the gods. That offended some of them, of course, but his other great deeds pleased them, so the gods, well, you know how it is. That’s beside the point though – will you go there and seize it back in the name of its rightful ruler? Though he sleeps, Hades is still King of this realm and Agamemnon is but a mortal soul. He must be stopped, or where will it end? Elysium is his, where next? Will he conquer all the underworld?’

‘How do I defeat such a man?’ you ask.

‘Good question. Hmm… maybe ask his wife, Klytemnestra. Her shade was sent to the Mourning Fields; she might know. She’s killed him once already, after all. If you do this for us, I will grant you a house in Elysium. That’s prime real estate, that is.’

Gain the codeword ***Niggle*** and ► 452

177

‘Tell me, did I reward you for your… I forget!’

You remain silent. ‘Oh, well… here,’ says Charon, and he shows you some of things that have ended up on his barge. You may choose one only.

sepulchral armour x 1 (prevents a wound, one use only)
blessed soil of Arcadia
copper ore
phoenix tears
A pouch containing 100 pyr

‘Thank you, dread lord,’ you say as you take your reward and leave.

From here you can go:

East into the desert ► **686** in *The Hammer of the Sun*
South into the desert ► **400** in *The Hammer of the Sun*
North to the southern gate of Vulcan City ► **555** in *Workshop of the Gods*
South on the Sacred Way ► **72**
West into Hades ► **193**

178

If you have the codeword ***New-Apollo*** ► **671**; otherwise read on.

You have to wade out to the islet through the black, stinking sludge of the delta. Insects swarm all over you, biting and stinging. Thankfully, they do not follow you onto the islet, where you find a white marble altar dedicated to Apollo. Sadly it has been desecrated – filth has been smeared over the inscriptions and the top is heaped with black mud. You clean it up, but to reconsecrate the altar, you will have to sing a paean to the god. You can leave (► **493**) or attempt a paean in praise of Apollo. To do so, make a CHARM roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► **36**
Fail ► **351**

179

‘I lived seven lifetimes as a man, but white-armed Hera turned me into a woman, and I lived as one for seven years. I even bore children. I am twofold and know the hearts of men and women.’

- **198** and choose again

180

You remember what happened last time you were in this situation. The strixes, it seems, do not. You kill several quickly, and just like the last time, they flee in terror. They fly back up to their tower top, glaring down at you, as if daring you to come any closer.

Once again, you can harvest the beaks of the dead strixes – note some **copper ore** on your Adventure Sheet, and if you have a **book of recipes**, you can make one batch of **strix stew**. Note the **strix stew** on your Adventure Sheet.

Time to leave this place ► **564**

181

‘Well,’ says Protagoras, ‘although we have not definitively proved Zeno’s arrow paradox, we have not disproved it either.’

‘Bah, more sophistry,’ says Cleanthes.

‘According to your methods, it can never be proved, as you will always reword the evidence to suit your arguments,’ says Xenophanes.

‘Well, our adventurer has the arrow, perhaps they will go forth and prove the paradox one way or the other for us. Please return if you do,’ says Aspasia. ‘In the meantime, I have another question for you all to consider.’

‘Good! Anything that will stop us wasting time with Protagoras’ ludicrous word games.’ says Cleanthes.

‘Ludicrous word games? How dare you. After all, isn’t that the basis of all philosophy, and thus the basis of all art, science and religion – word games.’

‘Nonsense, there is also hypothesis, experiment, evidence and conclusion,’ says Xenophanes.

‘Bah, also just words, and all a waste of time, life is here to be endured, not understood,’ barks Cleanthes the Stoic.

‘Endured? Only in the pool of your own self-made misery, Cleanthes! No, life is here to be enjoyed,’ says Aristippus.

Protagoras adds gleefully, ‘Ah, but Cleanthes, don’t you see? My word games are the very thing that you must endure. Thus, it is I who give your life meaning.’

Cleanthes throws his hands into the air, ‘Bah, and double bah! Listening to you is like the suffering of Prometheus – chained to a rock and having his liver pecked out every day by an eagle.’

‘Surely a Stoic’s dream!’ says Protagoras.

‘Argh…’ wails Cleanthes. Aristippus bursts into laughter. Xenophanes shakes his head.

You are about to leave them to their bickering when Aspasia says, ‘Now, now, gentlemen, please. Listen. Just before I… arrived here… I was in Athens, holding a philosophers’ symposium. A merchant came and showed me a scroll from the far, far east, way beyond Persia…’

The philosophers fall silent, their curiosity piqued. As is yours, in fact. You decide to wait and hear this tale before leaving.

► **693**

182

If you have the codeword ***Newhouse*** or ***Nimbus*** ► **343** immediately. If not, read on.

If you have the codeword ***Negate*** ► **656** immediately. If not, read on.

You walk through a crumbling portico to a long, rectangular, open-air bath of faded mosaics. It is filled with algae-ridden brackish water. A ghostly figure, dressed in faded but once fine regal robes, dotted with what looks like splashes of dried blood, sits on the edge of the bath, playing with a long, rust-ridden – or perhaps it is also dried blood – iron dagger. She gestures to the bath. ‘Take your ease, only five pyr.’

If you took a bath in that water, you’d probably come out dirtier than when you went in, not to mention likely get stabbed to death, you think to yourself.

‘Are you Klytemnestra?’ you ask.

‘I am,’ she replies in a hoarse whisper.

‘Tell me your story.’

She fixes you with a bitter stare, her eyes dark pools in a spectral, grief-worn face. ‘I will,’ she says.

► **373**

183

As they bicker amongst themselves, you step in and neatly chop off Ena's head. It flops to the ground with a spray of black ichor.

'Argh, the mortal tricked us!' shrieks Dio.

'Not that I liked Ena much,' says Tria, 'but that hurt, and even though I'm sure he'll grow back again, you're not getting away with it!' and he bites down at you, intent on swallowing your head.

You try to dodge. Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **672**

Fail ► **304**

184

‘Tie me to the prow,’ you command the bargeman, ‘and do not listen to me should I ask to be freed. Whatever I say, don’t untie me.’

The ghostly bargeman looks at you as if you are mad, but he does as you say.

As you pass on, you watch the siren reclining on the river bank, a beautiful mermaid, with long flowing hair and a face like starlight and roses. You try to ignore the rest of her body, which is that of a dolphin. She plucks her lyre and begins to sing. But something appears to be wrong – her voice is out of tune, off-key and raucous, like the sound of metal dragged across gravel. You struggle to break free, so that you can stop your ears, but you are too tightly bound. You beg the bargeman to free you, but he shakes his head, as you so firmly commanded him. There is no escape from your suffering. Finally, you pass out of earshot, and the bargeman unties you.

‘That was awful! I thought her song was supposed to be enchanting?’

‘Ah, I see, I wondered why you wanted to be tied up. And enchanting? No. She’s so awful a singer we always plug our ears whenever we pass,’ says the bargeman.

You sail on, heading west downriver. Will you:

Continue to the delta ► **762**

Debark onto the south bank ► **537**

Debark onto the north bank ► **51**

185

‘Right then, you’re the mark, and we’re savage bandits, me and Alex here,’ says the one with spear.

‘Hey, you agreed to call me Talos, you know like the giant bronze man. It’s more scary sounding and that,’ says Alex.

‘Oh yeah, me and Talos. We’re tough – now give us all your stuff or die!’

‘You tell ‘em, Georgios, er… I mean Achilles.’

What will you do:

Offer them 25 pyr instead (if you have that much) ► **531**

Attack! ► **697**

Talk your way out of it ► **620**

186

Gain the codeword ***Napalm***.

‘I don’t suppose you can get me some?’ asks Apelles. ‘Just a box of paints, I’ll be very grateful. Tell you what – get me what I need and I’ll paint you first.’ He puts up a thumb, and measures you up and down. ‘A great adventurer like you, you’d make an excellent subject.’

You tell him you’ll keep one eye open for some paint.

‘Thank you, adventurer. And hurry back, as soon as and all that, my dear.’

There is nothing more to do here. Will you head:

North ► **60**
West ► **330**
South-west ► **504**
South to the Phlegethon ► **169**
South-east ► **193**

187

Get the codeword ***Nullify***.

Davora is dead. You head back to the trapdoor from which she came to investigate her lair.

There is a ladder down into an old tomb, long abandoned but now the lair of the lamia. The stench is unbelievable, it is all you can do stop yourself throwing up. Using a scented cloth you descend.

You find heaps of bones in one corner, many showing the marks of gnawing teeth. A row of skulls on one shelf mark her victims. Each skull has a small name plate beneath, as mementoes. They say things like ‘Alexios, boy child, sweet as pie’ or ‘Melita, actress, bitter all the way through’ or ‘Leander, fought well, tasted better’ and so on. You also find a small pile of papyrus letters, correspondence between her and her sister, another lamia called Mormo.

Amongst the broken remnants of her victims’ possessions you find 75 pyr, a still workable **hardwood club** and a **laurel wreath**. Add them to your Adventure Sheet.

Of even more interest is what you find in another corner – a shrine to the king of the monsters, the dragon Typhon, spawn of Gaia and Tartarus. Beside it is a papyrus scroll that explains how to cast a spell of binding that will invoke the power of Typhon.

► **809**

188

Tick your Wound box. If you were already wounded ► 81 immediately. If not, read on.

You mistime your dodge and the hydra sinks its teeth into your forearm. Agonising, but at least you're still alive. As it rears back, you counter attack. Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► 614

Fail ► 131

189

This is the correct answer to Paris' gambling conundrum. 189 pyr is how much money he has left after losing at knucklebones.

The golden sphinx face sighs. 'Well done, you've got it. Now, tell them I did as I was asked!' says the sphinx and the great iron doors rumble open. You step through.

► **40**

190

‘You have serious issues with trust, my friend… but, bah, if I must, I will go.’ Tantalus walks into the cave, opens the door easily enough, turns back with an ‘I told you so’ look and disappears into the tomb. Some time passes. And some more time. Far too much time. You’ll have to go in after him.

► 233

191

You board the pirate barge. Time for you to plunder the plunderer and you do indeed find a goodly haul of plunder. 250 pyr, a **laurel wreath**, an **iron spear** and a **shrivelled heart**. Note them on your Adventure Sheet. When you are ready ► **294**

192

If you have the codeword ***Nicked*** ► 716 immediately. If not, read on.

As you draw near, you see that the shade at the prow is a woman, dressed in dark mourning robes.

‘By Poseidon’s balls, you’re actually alive, impressive,’ she says in a hoarse voice of the dead. ‘I am Hydna, and this is my barge, the *Threnody*. And that’s my crew, the Mourners.’ She points to a couple of other shades, also women, who emerge from below decks.

‘Do you want to take the tour? Only ten pyr,’ she says. ‘Show you what’s what in the bayou?’

Take the tour ► 223

Leave ► 796

193

If you have the **sceptre of Agamemnon**, roll a die. If you score a 1 or a 2 ► 767. If not, read on.

You walk across the shadowed land of Hades. Off to the east looms the mighty volcano of Thanatos, he who is death. To the north and west, you can make out the steaming Slimeswamp. Great clouds of smoke and steam bar the view north – that must be the river of fire. Ashes fall like rain. Is it the effluvia of the volcano or the ashes of the cremated dead?

Nearby, you can see a tumulus or burial mound, with a stone pillared doorways set into its earthen side. Will you go:

East to the volcano ► 405
South-west to the swamp ► 25
North to the mountains ► 60
North-west to the land between the Phlegethon and the Styx ► 711
West to the river Phlegethon ► 169
South to the plains ► 412
South-east to a lake ► 639
Investigate the tumulus ► 249

194

The antechamber is also well lit, with bronze statues on your left and right of two hugely fat balding men with distended pot bellies. Beyond them is a wide doorway leading to a much larger space beyond. You know this a trap, for these are bellies of doom and they will try to crush you between them like Scylla and Charybdis. You dive forward between them, avoiding the clash of bellies.

Ahead, the chamber opens out into a large space. You step into it. ► **698**

195

You walk carefully out onto the ice. It stinks, but is solid enough. You spot a young woman clinging desperately onto the edge of a hole in the ice. She appears to be alive, like you, which causes you to pull up in surprise. As you draw near, you can see she's in a bad way and won't be able to hang on for much longer. Her face is pale, her lips blue with cold, and a shock of red hair tumbles down her shoulders from under a round blue cap. She wears light leather armour over a blue tunic. Her satchel lies nearby, including a fine looking flute.

'Don't just stand there like a dunderheaded out-of-work clown! Help me!' she yells. Will you:

Help her ► **421**

Steal her stuff and leave ► **675**

196

You drive your weapon up through the base of the jaw, and out through the top, and then rip it back out, cleaving the head in two. The remaining head utters a wild cry of anger and whips down at you, trying to wrap its jaws around your neck. You try to dodge back.

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► **824**

Fail ► **188**

197

You make a shambling run for it, but the body on your shoulder is too heavy, and several spiders catch up to you. One of them bites you in the ankle, injecting venom into to you. You can feel it burning its way up your body, and then suddenly you freeze and fall to the ground. You are unable to move. To your horror the spiders bundle you up and carry you back to the vile waters of the swamp. There they submerge you near a tree, and you stare up through the murky waters as thin mangrave roots squirm into your body from below, feeding you with oxygen. Some days pass in paralytic horror until finally you see a swollen seed-egg over your head. Another day later, and the seed egg bursts open and a long, thin tendril slowly worms its way down to burrow into your mouth and down your throat.

You come round, days later, your body twisted and melded into that of the mangrave tree you have now become. Memories of your previous life slowly fade as you are filled with a kind of yearning rage, to feed upon mankind and to spread your seed. Not even the gods can save you from this fate, for you are not dead, merely… different. Your adventure ends here.

► **750**

198

You enter the house of Tiresias the soothsayer. Inside it is surprising homely, as if it were a house in Arcadia or Iskandria, not a house of the dead in Hades. There is even a small fire on the hearth. It's actually warm in here, unlike the perpetually cold-as-the-grave air of the underworld. Small statues of Apollo and Athena stand on either side of the fire, and ornaments adorn a mantelpiece. There are tapestries on the walls and a rug on the floor. Seated at a low marble table is the seer Tiresias, or rather his shade, blind in death as he was in life. As if he knew your thoughts already, he says, 'I am wealthy for a shade – many come to me still, and bring gifts in exchange for wisdom.'

For a moment, you are unsure whether the shade before you is a man or a woman. But then… a man. No, wait, a woman… is it a trick of the light, here in the ever grey that is Hades?

To ask Tiresias a question you must pay 10 pyr. Cross the coins off before asking. Will you ask about:

Wolfshadow ► **683**
Mormo ► **530**
If he is man or woman ► **179**
Typhon ► **86**
How to get into the Mourning Fields ► **235**
The great labours ► **153**
How to get into the Garden of Persephone ► **764**
Night's children ► **347**
Take your leave ► **75**

199

The basket rocks gently up to the boat, but this time it contains only rotten fruit, mouldy bread and a jug of wine, long turned to vinegar. Someone's picnic, lost down the river. But who picnics on the banks of the Styx? Note some **vinegar of Hades** on your Adventure Sheet. Anyway, there is nothing more to be done here. ► 294

200

What you thought was a sundial is in fact a pointer of some kind, set into a large circular plate of silver. Inlaid into the silver plate is a beautiful map of Hades. You can move the pointer to certain locations on the map. Nearby is a lever and the words ‘Choose your destination, and pull, Dread Lord.’ Below that, there is a signature: ‘Daedalus’.

Daedalus – the great inventor. It seems he has constructed what appears to be a travel device for Hades himself. You examine it closely. Will you set the pointer and pull the lever for:

Plains of Howling Darkness ► **398**
Delta of Darkness ► **477**
Slimeswamp ► **58**
Black Bayou ► **260**
Volcano of Thanatos ► **427**
South-west corner of Hades ► **560**
North-west corner ► **264**
South-east corner ► **52**
North-east corner ► **735**
Far north ► **318**
Far south ► **337**
Far east ► **669**

Or remain here and leave the throne in the normal way – via the doors ► **213**

201

‘I am Trapjaw, and this is where you will die, mortal, alone in the darkness!’ continues the daemonic voice. If you have a **bronze butterfly** ► 2; if not, read on.

You cannot see anything, not even your own hand in front of your face. Suddenly there is a terrible, agonizing pain in your leg followed by sinister laughter. Trapjaw has taken a bite out of your thigh!

Tick your Wound box. If you were already wounded, then you do, indeed, die alone in darkness although the gods still favour you even after death ► 111

However, if you still live ► 324

202

You pull off some excellent moves with your weapon, striking Wolfshadow several times but to no avail. With a sense of mounting horror you begin to realise that Wolfshadow is invulnerable to all your weapons. You have no choice but to break off and make a run for it.

► **91**

203

You scream a battle cry – ‘By red-handed Ares!’ – and charge in. Blubberjaw surges up to meet you, trying to wrap his huge, fat arms around you, blubber hanging off them like obscene fruits. You will be baked alive in that hideous hug despite your fireproof hide. This is not going to be an easy battle.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 9.

Succeed ► **637**

Fail ► **538**

204

□

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 653 immediately. If not, read on.

The bubble of river water bursts and propels a small wooden chest up into the air and down onto the barge deck where it shatters, spilling its contents at your feet.

‘Huh, aren’t you the lucky one,’ says the bargeman. ‘The gods must favour you.’

You find some **vinegar of Hades** and a **hardwood club**.

Where to now?

Disembark and east ► 51
Disembark and South-west ► 228
Disembark and North-west ► 273
Continue upriver by barge ► 364

205

You are no match for Mormo, the terrible vampire lamia. She catches you in her constrictor coils, and sinks her fangs into your neck. The life is both crushed and drained out of you. You die a horrible, agonising death. Yet that is not the end for one such as you, not quite.

► **111**

206

The dry weeds and thickets catch alight in moments. The fire spreads like a flood, and soon the Garden of Persephone is engulfed in flames. The bramble beast goes up in a great pillar of fire, like an enormous torch. You step back, shielding your face from the heat. Even the pavilion goes up in flames, and soon all that is left is ash and embers, smouldering under the pale, grey sky of Hades.

You grimace. Perhaps that was a little too effective. Could there be anything left in the burnt out remains of the pavilion? Gain the title **The Gardener** and ► 332

207

If you have the codeword ***Nibble*** ► 782. If not, read on.

This part of the underworld is even more gloomy and grey. The great granite mountains of the north tower over it, blocking out what meagre light there is. Nearby you see what is appears to be a hole in the ground. Cautiously, you peer over the side. Up wafts an unpleasant odour, like nothing you have ever smelt before. You can also hear the faint sounds of screaming or perhaps it is the whistling of the wind, you are not sure. Anyway, short of jumping to your certain death, there seems to be no way of getting down there.

From here you can head:

West ► 12
North to the mountains ► 226
East to the Acheron ► 821
South to the Black Bayou ► 273

208

‘You are not the ferryman,’ you bellow, and charge straight at him, brandishing your weapon. With a cry of fear, ‘Charon’ turns tail, hitches up his robes and runs as fast as he can, his cowl falling back to reveal a mop of yellow hair. An impostor, swindling travellers out of their hard-earned cash. You consider giving chase but he’s pretty fast, and in his haste he’s dropped a couple of things so you decide to investigate those. You find a **brazen trumpet** and a small pouch containing 100 pyr. Seems like it had been a profitable undertaking – until you came along.

Time to move on. Will you go:

North ► **51**
South ► **537**
West ► **228**
South-east to the Slimeswamp ► **38**
Follow the river north-east ► **504**

209

You cut the palm of your hand, and drip some of your blood onto the ground, and then move away as quietly as you can. Your reasoning is correct. The spiderling is instantly drawn to the smell of blood, giving you the chance to circle behind her as she sniffs the ground. You have the drop on the creature.

Make a STRENGTH or GRACE roll at difficulty 5.

Succeed ► **353**

Fail ► **487**

210

If you have some **silver buckles** ► 783 immediately. If not, read on.

You can hardly free everyone. Nor should you, perhaps, without knowing their crimes – and it would not be prudent to take on the Furies, no matter how heroic you are. All you can do is return to the surface or descend deeper into the dark, for at the other end of the chamber of the Furies is a stairway leading down into the depths.

Go back up ► 8

Go down ► 577

211

You try and pick some of them off with your bow before they close. Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **583**

Fail ► **340**

212

Suddenly, behind the shade warriors, something huge writhes up out of the water with a screeching roar. It is a massive tentacled creature, like an enormous squid the size of a house.

‘Aieee, a kraken!’ screams one of the Argonauts. You step back, weapon at the ready. The kraken reaches for the three warrior shades with multiple tentacles, picks them up as if they were bread sticks and swallows them down, armour and everything, all in a few seconds.

You think you are next but it seems this creature is immune to the memory-erasing powers of the Lethe for it remembers that you once fed it when it was a baby. You marvel at how big it has become!

Thankfully, rather than chomping you down like you were a candy snack, the kraken chirrups a greeting. The creature reaches into the river, and then gently lays down some things in front of you, including a bottle of **Lethe water x3**. It has three doses of the waters of forgetfulness. Do not drink it yourself! It may prove useful elsewhere, however. The kraken also gifts you an **iron spear** and some **fresh fish**. It then clacks with its beak with what really feels like a goodbye, before sinking below the waves of the Lethe and out of sight.

► 357

213

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 155 immediately. If not, read on.

You walk into a large rectangular space, the white walls of which are covered in huge murals, showing the various deeds of the god Hades in the Titanomachy, the great war between the Titans and the Olympians. On one wall, Hades is shown donning his helm of invisibility, sneaking into the camp of the titans, and destroying much of their equipment. In another he battles with a terrible monster. On the opposite wall, he sits in judgement on his ebony throne, looking especially noble and wise.

Just in front of you, however, is a white marble desk, behind which a figure is busy searching his way through a stack of papyrus scrolls.

► 176

214

You’re in front of the statue of your god. The two coins seem a meagre offering compared to the wealth your more affluent neighbours press into the priests’ hands. Yet, as you gaze down, careful not to meet the eyes of the god, you feel a presence that brushes over you like the hem of an enormous cloak. Darkness swims in your eyes, but not the darkness of oblivion. It is the infinite shadow that lies in the path of a light so intense that to look directly at it would sear your eyes to blindness.

The voice of the god is not heard, but felt in every atom of your being: ‘You are the crop your parents sowed, the tree they planted, the grapes they pressed. In your deeds their little lives will gain glory. Go now to meet your destiny.’

Add +1 to any one attribute of your choice (ie STRENGTH, CHARM, INGENUITY, or GRACE) then ► **753**

215

This side of the farm holds what were once the bedrooms. In the biggest room, you find an old dresser with a big bronze mirror atop it, rusted, begrimed with filth but still serviceable enough to see your face in it.

Was that..? Did you..? Someone else's face? You whip around – but no, nothing there. A trick of the light, it must be, that couldn't have been… eyes? In the mirror, staring at you? Surely not! But then again, you are in hell. With a shiver, you rise up, ready to quit this haunted place when you notice the old jewellery box beside the mirror. Will you:

Open the box ► **334**

Leave the farmhouse ► **412**

216

Their jaws drop in amazement.

‘Incredible, a talking butterfly!’ says Aristippus.

‘But doesn’t that mean… you know…’ says a tongue tied Xenophanes.

‘Exactly,’ says Protagoras, ‘It means the silk road philosopher’s proposition is true, we are all just dreaming butterflies.’

‘By the secret mysteries of Hermes, I think you’re right.’ says Cleanthes.

‘All this is just a dream, then?’ says Aspasia.

‘Well, I’m dreaming of cake, that’s for sure,’ says Aristippus.

‘Well, thank you adventurer, another revelation for us all. We should reward you.’ says Aspasia.

‘Well, as I am in fact a butterfly, dreaming of being a man, I have no further use for this,’ says Xenophanes, and he hands you a **ring of the Philosopher King (3 uses)**. Note it on your Adventure sheet. The ring has 3 charges. Each charge will add 1 to any future CHARM or INGENUITY rolls but can only be used once for each roll. You may decide to use the ring *after* you have rolled the dice, changing the result. Note it on your Adventure Sheet.

You put on the ring, and thank them. As quick as you can, you stuff the butterfly into your backpack before it starts glowing redly and take your leave, before they discover that it is, in fact, a simple mechanical device of bronze.

► **144**

217

□

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 788 immediately. If not, read on.

You approach the barge. On closer inspection you can see it is of some kind of jet black wood, painted with chipped and fading silver motifs. A silver plate on the prow has the name *Sea Shadow* stencilled in black upon it. As you approach, a ghostly bargeman comes out to greet you. You can barely make out his shadowy features, but enough to see the expression of surprise on his face.

'You are alive, and yet you walk the paths of the dead,' he says in a spectral voice.

'I am and I do. Is that a problem?' you reply.

The spectral bargeman thinks for a moment, and then gives a smoky shrug. 'Actually, no, can't see why. Not my business either, so, welcome to the *Sea Shadow*. Me and my crew – err… well, me at any rate, will take you up or down river, as you please. Five pyr, living or not.'

Will you go:

North-east by river ► 524

West by river ► 401

Go back and cross the bridge on foot ► 94

218

You rush to the chains binding one of Prometheus's arms and try to lever a link open. The titan lends his own considerable strength. However, these links, although of bronze, are massive indeed.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 9.

Succeed ► **408**

Fail ► **605**

219

You throw the jar of **honey of hades** to one side of the chamber. Cross it off your possessions.

It shatters, spraying its sweet contents around and about. The maggots swarm *en masse* to the sweet nectar, fighting amongst themselves in their desire to feed upon it, leaving you an easy way out of the chamber. You run past following the river tunnel onward.

► **589**

220

You try and twist out of the way, but she is too fast for you. Her face lights up with malicious glee and she rakes you with her filthy, taloned nails that are like needles of black iron.

'Oh my,' she cries, 'You look delicious. I'll save a few drops of your blood to toast Typhon himself tonight.'

If you are already wounded ► **69**

If not ► **467**

221

If you have the codeword ***Noble*** ► **601** immediately. If not, read on.

You step into the open doorway. It leads into a short corridor, lit with lanterns hanging from the ceiling. That gives you pause for thought. Someone – or something – must be on hand to relight them when they run out of oil.

Your foot nudges something underfoot. You look down. It is the skeletal remains of a human, wearing tattered leather armour. His or her skull has been crushed flat, as if by a hammer or a heavy club. Up ahead another skeleton has been nailed to the wall by a spear through its rib cage. Its skull too has been shattered by something. Will you:

Press on ► **771**

Leave this place ► **76**

222

You have been transported to Hades but where have you ended up? Roll a die

score 1-2: City of the dead ► **696**
score 3-4: River Styx ► **145**
score 5-6: River Acheron ► **3**

223

Cross off the 10 pyr. The Mourners punt the *Threnody* slowly across the coal-black waters of the Bayou. Hydna points to a nearby islet, upon which rests an ancient tomb.

‘There’s the tomb of Laertes, one of Jason’s Argonauts and father of Odysseus. And over there,’ rasps Hydna, pointing at a copse of cypress trees atop a mound of heaped black earth on the lakeshore, ‘is the lair of some many-headed hydra. We stay away from them, obviously. They can devour even the already dead. A soul snack they call it, though for us it is oblivion, of course. Some shades who have been here in Hades for too long seek them out, and offer themselves up.’

‘And what’s your story?’ you ask.

‘I too was a hero like you, a great swimmer and diver. Once, I swam underwater ‘neath the ships of Xerxes’ Persian fleet, and cut many anchors. A lot of their ships, unmoored in the coming storm, were sunk. There’s even a statue of me at Delphi. Bet you can’t say that, eh?’

‘True. Not yet at any rate,’ you reply.

‘But then I got old and drowned, diving for pearls. Ah well.’

‘Will you seek the solace of oblivion from the Hydra too one day?’ you ask.

‘No doubt, but for now, I am content, ferrying tourists around the black waters of hell.’

► **158**

224

‘A real live customer! Welcome to Soulmart, the departed store. I have everything,’ says a phantasmal figure wreathed in wispy white shadows, waving a ghostly hand at his goods. ‘I am… umm… I forget my name, but merchant in life, merchant in death, and all that.’

You can buy and sell at the following prices:

	To buy	*To sell*
Fresh fish	20 pyr	15 pyr
Honey cake	–	50 pyr
Honey of Hades	–	250 pyr
Lava gem	90 pyr	80 pyr
Phoenix tears	100 pyr	50 pyr
Pomegranate wine	–	35 pyr
Recurve bow	–	40 pyr
Shrivelled heart	80 pyr	60 pyr
Statuette of Ares	75 pyr	50 pyr
Strix stew	25 pyr	20 pyr
Vinegar of Hades	20 pyr	15 pyr
Venison sausages	15 pyr	10 pyr
Weasel blood	–	50 pyr

When you’ve completed your business at the market ► **10**

225

The great archway has these words written over it:

EREBUS
THE HALLS OF NIGHT

You have returned to the Halls of Night in Erebus. You are either foolhardy or, hopefully, well equipped. You step into darkness – and are plunged into the blackest night. No torch, nor lamp or lantern can penetrate this darkness. If you have a **bronze butterfly** you can release its reddish glow to see by, or you could use the **hubcap of Helios**, which will light the way, or some **phoenix tears**, which you can rub into your eyes so you can see in the dark (cross the tears off your possessions if you use them).

If you use one of these ► **449**
If you have none of these ► **832**

226

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there is a tick in the box already, ► 338 immediately. If not, read on.

You trudge your way up into the mountains of north-west Hades, under a lowering sky with an icy wind blowing ash into your face. At least this high up the smell of grave dirt and funeral cerements is less pronounced. There is not much around here save rock and ash, but you do find a cleft in the rock wherein there lies, incongruously, a shrine to Aphrodite, goddess of love. It is a well-tended altar, somehow, of clean white marble with red roses laid across the top. The roses are blackened and decaying at the edges, but that's what you'd expect in the underworld. Several offerings have been laid at the feet of the altar. Most of them are small pouches of between twenty and thirty coins. Will you:

Leave an offering of 25 pyr ► 582
Take all the offerings ► 391
Leave the mountain ► 752

227

The philosophers stand behind you as you nock the arrow to your bow and take aim at a tree. Other shades from the inn have gathered to watch the experiment, perhaps hoping to see an arrow halted in mid-air.

You draw and let loose. The arrow thuds into a tree and the small crowd heaves a sigh of disappointment which, as they are all spectral shades, sounds like the soughing of the wind through trees. Sacrotes and Plota shrug.

‘Well, that was to be expected I suppose, says Plota.

‘Ah, except I was aiming for that other tree, behind that one, and I never miss. See, it has indeed been halted half way to its target!’ you say, echoing the sophistry of Protagoras…

‘But… but that means…’ mutters Plota.

‘It means it really is Zeno’s arrow and the proposition is true, by Athena’s arse!’ says Sacrotes.

‘Well in regard to this particular arrow at least,’ says Plota.

‘Anyway, will you sign an affidavit to that effect?’ you ask.

‘What, certifying what we have seen?’ says Plota, somewhat warily.

‘Yes, indeed, with the signed declaration of the two greatest philosophers it will cause a sensation in the symposiums of the living!’ you say.

‘Indeed. But what’s in it for us?’ says Sacrotes.

‘The recognition you deserve, of course. You’ll be remembered as the philosophers who proved Zeno’s paradox to be true.’

They stare at you for a moment and then exchange a look.

‘Bring papyrus and quill, immediately!’ shouts Sacrotes.

‘At last, the recognition we deserve! Now don’t forget the ink!’ adds Plota.

► **810**

228

You've come to forested woodland north of the delta. It is a forest, but a forest in the underworld. Some trees are gnarled and twisted, their leaves a kind of sickly greyish-green and all is shrouded in gloom. Others have abundant leaves and branches but their bark is as white as bone and their leaves grey or black. These are the white poplars of Hades, sacred to the god himself. The forest floor is covered in rotting organic matter, both crunchy and slimy underfoot. It reeks of decay. Will you go:

Deeper into the forest ► 63
North to the Black Bayou ► 273
West to the Sacred Way ► 346
South to the delta ► 493
North-east ► 51
South-east ► 537
Down to the river Acheron ► 3

229

You try to take advantage of the daemon's momentary blindness, but you panic and can't think of what to do. Trapjaw, narrowing his eyes against the light, grabs at you, trying to draw you into the enormous bone-jaws of his chest. You must fight Trapjaw. He is a dreadful opponent.

Make a STRENGTH or a GRACE roll at difficulty 10.

Succeed ► **592**

Fail ► **799**

230

Gain the codeword ***Nest***. You agree to help her in return for free use of all her inns and a cut of the profits. ‘Great!’ she says. She spits on her hand to shake yours and seal the deal, but her spit is just a small gobbet of shadow, and you can’t clasp her spectral hand anyway. ‘Ah, well, we’ll just have to trust each other then, eh?’ she says. ‘Good luck getting a silver seal of Hades, it won’t be easy, but if there’s anyone that can pull that off, it’s you.’

If you already have a **silver seal of Hades** ► **170**

If not ► **465**

231

You are able to kill the spiders quickly before the alarm is raised. There are about ten more or so cocoons in your longhouse. Will you:

Sneak into the temple ► **664**

Free whoever is cocooned ► **591**

232

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 180 immediately. If not, read on.

You kill four strixes in quick succession, before they can make a mark on you but even so, you are about to be overwhelmed. The strixes are birds that act almost entirely as a flock, but individually they are hopeless cowards. At the sight of their companions' quick deaths, they lose heart, turn tail and flee, cawing disconsolately. They fly back up to their tower top, glaring down at you, as if daring you to come any closer.

You are left with several dead strixes. You can harvest their beaks – note that you have some **copper ore** on your Adventure Sheet. Also, if you have a **book of recipes**, you can make one batch of **strix stew**. It's not really something you would care to eat, but some in the underworld prize it, and it may come in useful elsewhere. Note the **strix stew** on your Adventure Sheet.

You look up at the tower, wondering what treasures these strixes, like magpies, have collected over the years. There is an opening at the base of the tower where a door once stood.

March in and try to intimidate the strixes ► 329

Try and calm them with a song ► 53

Be on your way ► 564

233

Has he got himself into trouble, you wonder. The entrance to the tomb of Pelops is a large stone door with a marble portico covered in friezes depicting Pelops' accomplishments – winning chariot races, serving Poseidon, founding the Olympic Games, ruling the Peloponnesus (named for him). It is slightly ajar.

'Tantalus?' you say, lightly pushing the door.

It swings open as if on recently oiled hinges and you step inside. Ahead, a large frieze-carved sarcophagus rests in the centre of a circular chamber. The walls are painted with more scenes from the life of Pelops. It is a fine tomb.

Suddenly the door slams shut behind you and the room is plunged into absolute darkness.

'Hah, you fool!' Tantalus crows from the other side of the portal. 'You think I would share the golden dog or anything of mine with a worthless worm like you? No, you will fester and die in there, a suitable companion in death for my burdensome and rebellious son. I, though, am free. Free!'

His last cry fades on the wind as he scampers away. You test the door. It appears to have been barred from the outside.

► **365**

234

Time to leave this grey-shrouded area of the underworld and the yawning black hole in the ground. Will you go:

West ► 12
North to the mountains ► 226
East to the Acheron ► 821
South to the Black Bayou ► 273

235

‘Only those with grief in their hearts, the heart-broken, the bereaved, those whose love is spurned – you get the picture – only they can enter the Mourning Fields.’

‘So, how do I get in?’ you say.

‘You must be stricken with grief. Listen – there was once a daughter of Tantalus, Niobe. She boasted of her children, and the gods, cruel haters of hubris, struck her down for it, by slaughtering all her offspring. The grief turned poor Niobe into stone, a rock that weeps tears forever. Some say to drink of those tears is to be grief stricken. If you really want to be sorrow-filled, then find her. It is said her statue is to be found at the headwaters of the river Styx, east of here.’

► **198**

236

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **691** immediately. If not, read on.

You jury-rig a quick fishing rod with the **lodestone** attached to it and walk out onto the ice. You drop the line down into the ice cold waters of the Cocytus – and almost immediately find something. You are favoured by the gods indeed. You haul out a rusty iron medallion embossed with the face of Pan, the wild god. Is this Orphea's family heirloom? A strange family, if so. Anyway, note **Pan's amulet** on your Adventure Sheet.

And then you feel the ice shifting beneath you! Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **473**

Fail ► **569**

237

It is neatly laid out here the northern foothills of the City of the Dead, with baths, gardens and pillared avenues. Marble statues of goddesses and heroines are dotted around.

There are plants, flowers and trees that aren't entirely of black bramble or twisted thorns. There is even the occasional flash of blue or green amidst the ubiquitous death-black, bone-white and blood-red colours of the land of the dead you are used to. For Hades, this is positively Arcadian!

And then you see why. Nearby is a high-walled garden of some kind, with a fortified portal. A sign reads 'The Garden of Persephone'. Persephone is the consort of Hades, queen of the Underworld but she spends only half the year in Hades, the other half is spent in Arcadia for Persephone is also the goddess of the spring and daughter of Demeter, the harvest goddess.

Nearby, near a fountain and a copse of white poplars, several shades sit as if in discussion. Will you go:

To the garden ► 640
To the gathering of shades ► 770
East towards Vulcan City ► 325
West to the Necropolis ► 696
South towards the Styx ► 330
North-west to the river ► 821

238

If you have the codeword ***Noisome*** ► 447 immediately. If not, read on.

You climb down the ladder. As you do, the roar of rushing waters grows louder, carrying to your ears the faint sound of voices also.

You step down into a wide underground plaza of sorts, well-lit with lanterns, set around an altar to Hypnos, the god of sleep. Three figures sit before the altar and beyond them, an underground river rushes past, presumably the Lethe, the river of forgetfulness or river of oblivion.

As you approach, the three figures turn, and stand up. They are shades of the dead, but dressed as hoplite marines – lightly armoured seamen. You notice each has a badge of a golden fleece. These are the shades of Argonauts – but which ones?

'Who dares disturb our rest,' says one, drawing a kopis, a single-edged cutting sword.

'We have come seeking the peace of oblivion. You, who are living, remind us of what we once had, and what it is we wish to forget,' says another, hefting a spear and a shield.

'Such memories are like shards of ice in our hearts,' says the third, reaching for his bow.

The Argonauts, the crew of the *Argo*, were great heroes in their day. They were the men who accompanied Jason on his quest to find the Golden Fleece so they will not be easily defeated. You'd best try and talk your way out of this. Make a CHARM roll at difficulty 7. If you have the **journal of the Argo**, you can add 2 to the roll.

Succeed ► 635

Fail ► 596

239

You find a narrow enough point where you can make out some trees on the other side. If you can shoot a few arrows carrying a rope line into a tree or two, you should be able to create a kind of rickety rope bridge. Risky but do-able.

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► **124**

Fail ► **491**

240

You lead them back through the Slimeswamp, a fetid morass of steaming muck and foul, brackish water. Corpses lie just below the surface, preserved despite the filthy waters by the roots of the mangrave trees that grow out of the slime – half corpse, half tree, twisted faces leering at you out of gnarled, black-barked trunks.

You take them to the temple of Arachne and the tunnel to Arcadia. Lampeto and her two companions look overjoyed – as far as three people who have been dead for longer than you've been alive could be said to be overjoyed, that is.

'Thank you, my saviour,' says Lampeto, resting a ghostly hand on your shoulder. 'As I am – or at least once was – a Queen of the Amazons, I dub thee Queen's Champion!'

Note the title **Queen's Champion** on your Adventure Sheet.

Lampeto says her farewells.

'Come and find me in in Boreas. There is more work we can do together. The more you aid me, the greater will your reward be, trust me!' With that, the three shades disappear into Arcadia and are gone.

If you want to follow them through the tunnel to Arcadia ► **250** in *The Wild Woods*. If not, will you go:

North-west to the Styx ► **145**

West ► **537**

East ► **412**

South to the Sacred Way ► **731**

241

□□□

Put a tick in a box. If two boxes are now ticked ► **805** immediately. If all three boxes are now ticked ► **413** immediately. If not, read on.

There is a sudden knock on the door. Who could that be? You open the door and there stands a beautiful young woman, long auburn hair, almond shaped eyes with irises as black as obsidian, fine formed face, a long graceful neck. She wears a tight-fitting dress made of intricately stitched together scales of silk and velvet.

'Hello,' she says. 'Can I come in?'

You are so taken by her beauty, you step back and let her in without a thought. She smiles a perfect smile, revealing bright white and rather needle-like teeth.

'Thank you so much. I've heard so much about you, can I have you for dinner?' she says.

Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **362**

Fail ► **518**

242

They huddle together and begin to whisper between themselves. After a few minutes, Aspasia say, ‘We have decided to impart some of the wisdom of the great philosophers to you as your reward,’ she says. She gestures to Cleanthes to start.

‘Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet – so said Aristotle,’ says Cleanthes the Stoic.

‘Nothing exists except atoms and empty space; everything else is just opinion – so said Democritus,’ says old Xenophanes.

‘There is nothing permanent except change – so said Heraclitus,’ says Protagoras the Sophist.

‘By all means, get married. If you find a good partner, you’ll be happy; if not, you’ll become a philosopher – so said Socrates himself,’ says Aristippus the hedonist.

And finally, Aspasia: ‘Every heart sings a song, incomplete, until another heart whispers back. Those who wish to sing always find a song – so said Plato.’

You cross your arms. ‘A bag of gold or a weapon made by the gods, or perhaps a clever device of some kind, would have been more useful.’

‘Hah! These aphorisms of the great philosophers are worth far more than the mere baubles of earthly existence,’ says Protagoras.

‘Indeed, think of strengthening your mind rather than your body for once,’ says Xenophanes.

‘After all, no hero can achieve greatness without a strong mind,’ says Cleanthes.

‘Bah, they’re talking nonsense of course,’ says Aristippus, ‘their words are indeed largely useless. A nice bag of gold would have been great, but then again, we are philosophers, so what did you expect?’

You shrug. He has a point. If you have a **bronze butterfly** ► 478. If not, read on.

Graciously, you thank the philosophers for their wisdom and take your leave. ‘Come back soon,’ says Aspasia.

► 144

243

You reach for the doll. A bitter, despairing wail fills the air – is that a hand you can see in the mirror, reaching for you? You turn around, heart galloping - but no… nothing.

You take the **child's doll**. Note it among your possessions. You hurry out of the bedroom, looking over your shoulder the whole time, but there are only rags and tatters. Nothing moves, not even in the rusted mirror.

Leave the farmhouse ► **412**

Investigate the well ► **275**

244

You cower in the ashes, trying to stop yourself sneezing, but Wolfshadow has sniffed you out already, and he tears into the ash mound, clamps his jaws around your leg, and drags you into the open, screaming.

You try to fight, but he rips your leg off. You watch in horror as he gobbles it down in seconds. You try to fight back but he is upon you again, and this time he rips your arm to shreds with his talons, until, mercifully he rips out your throat and your suffering is over. But even this is not the end for you.

► **111**

245

Incredibly, she pauses and looks behind her. It worked! You step forward and strike with your weapon. She roars in pain and also in humiliation.

'I can't believe I fell for that.' With that she advances upon you. She is a formidable opponent, even when wounded.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **353**

Fail ► **761**

246

The last time you were here you set fire to the Garden of Persephone and now it is a desert of black ash, a charred, smouldering ruin. Smoke still twirls up from the burned out pavilion.

Try again to solve the riddle in the pavilion ► **332**

Leave the garden ► **416**

247

You managed to kill Blubberjaw. What a feat! You've sliced him up into quivering piles of burning fat. The smell is horrible, the sight so hideous you doubt you will ever be able to forget it. You release the three bound victims Blubberjaw had kept, presumably to eat at his leisure. One of them is Lampeto the Amazon, once a great warrior woman by the look of her, but looking very weak and badly burned. You cannot imagine her suffering, and how long it must have gone on. You tell her that Myrina, her descendant of several generations, and a princess of the Halizon tribe sent you to rescue her. She can hardly believe it.

'I'm free? Really, this is not some trick of that fat monster's sick mind to prolong my suffering?'

'No, it is true,' you say, leading her away from the flames of the river Phlegethon. The other two, both women, follow along. It seems they have formed an attachment to Lampeto.

Gain the codeword ***Natron*** and ► **626**

248

If you have the title **Kraken Friend** ► 122 immediately. If not, read on.

‘’Tis the kraken!’ cries the phantasmal bargeman.

It has grown since last you encountered it – not fully yet, but at least three times the size of a man. It has wrapped itself around the prow, and extends a tentacle towards you, expectantly.

If you have **fresh fish**, **venison sausages**, a **honey cake** or some **strix stew**, and want to give it one of these ► 49

To give it nothing ► 154

249

If you have the codeword ***Numb*** ► **542**. If not, read on.

You approach the tomb. Two caryatid pillars hold up the pediment, in this case, what appear to be bronze automatons. A frieze on the pediment shows a winged figure flying up to the sun. Hermes perhaps?

The stone door lies shattered in pieces on the ground. Darkness yawns beyond.

Enter the tomb ► **141**

Leave this fearful place ► **193**

250

You are in the temple of Arachne, deep in the Slimeswamp. Further past the altar, there is a gate of heavy black iron. Above it is a symbol, the sigil of Arcadia. It looks like a tunnel – this is how the spiders were able to bring so many of the living into Hades no doubt though with their leader gone it is doubtful the spiders will have the intelligence to use it anymore. With their leader dead, the spider hordes seem aimless and confused.

Sneak out ► **25**

Follow the tunnel to Arcadia ► **250** in *The Wild Woods*

251

If you have the title **The Gardener** ► 18. If not, read on.

You have already gathered the **pomegranate seeds** from Persephone's garden. Nothing has changed since you were here last.

► 416

252

They settle in to listen as you begin to make up an epic lay of the heroes Alex and Georgios, who gain the nicknames ‘Achilles’ and ‘Talos’ after their extraordinary deeds. The bandits are captivated by your tale. You then sing about how Achilles was mightier and handsomer than Talos, and that all the young women loved him but spurned Talos. It is not long before they fall to arguing together.

‘No way you’re better looking than me, Georgios,’ splutters Alex indignantly, ‘you’re as ugly as that fat daemon, Blubberjaw!’

‘And you smell like swamp slime, with a face like a minotaur’s arse, to boot!’

It’s not long before they fall to blows. They forget you are there and you simply wander past. Time to move on. Will you go:

North ► **51**
South ► **537**
West ► **228**
South-east to the Slimeswamp ► **38**
Follow the river north-east ► **504**

253

Walking a little way upstream, you find a big branch and use it to stir up the river mud under a clump of leaves. Bubbles of trapped gas rise and break greasily on the surface.

You stroll back to find the children holding their noses in disgust. ‘What’s that stink?’ cries one.

‘Oh, there’s the carcass of a dead rat just a little way upriver,’ you say.

‘Ew!’

They’re out of the water and running home as if the Furies were after them. Job done.

Write your attributes on the Adventure Sheet:

STRENGTH 0
GRACE 0
CHARM 0
INGENUITY +1

Then ► **723**

254

You are overwhelmed by a chorus of shrill and strident whispers that fill your senses so you can hardly think. But every now and then, an intelligible phrase comes through.

‘Only the nimble can slip the net of many heads.’

‘Heed the automaton of Athena!’

‘Many a maggot can be hard to outrun.’

‘None can overthrow the daughter of gold save love itself.’

Obscurantic doggerel, but what else do you expect from an oracle? When you are ready, you can try again or head off.

Leave an offering of 10 pyr ► **740**

Leave the area ► **610**

255

You've been staunching your bleeding wound with a bit of old cotton. It is wet with your 'tasty' blood. Thinking fast, you soak it thoroughly and drop it behind you.

The lamia pauses to sweep it up, but not long enough to give you time to get away.

'Thanks,' she hisses, 'I'll use that as my pillow tonight.'

You are already badly wounded and you cannot outrun her. With a shriek of triumph she rakes your legs with her iron-black talons, hamstringing you. Before you've even hit the ground, she's spilled your guts onto the pallid, grey earth of Hades. She starts to feed on your dying body. The last thing you see is the lamia popping one of your eyes into her mouth as if it were a gourmet delicacy. The last thing you hear is a sibilant voice proclaiming excitedly 'Oooh, I'm going to drink your brains, yum!'

You are dead, it's true, but your journey is not yet over.

► **111**

256

Polykephales easily avoids your clumsy strike, and its other head lashes down and across, its gaping maw aiming to rip your head off. Desperately, you duck down under its strike.

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **672**

Fail ► **304**

257

With Tantalus out of the way, you head over to the wooden shed. Inside you find the two bronze bull automaton standing there unmoving and silent. Nearby is a beautifully built chariot, enchased in blue and silver with white mechanical wings folded in on the sides. You hitch the chariot to the bulls and immediately they come to life, snorting and pawing the ground, and the white wings spread out, ready for flight. This winged chariot was originally a gift from the god Poseidon to Pelops, the son of Tantalus. You can command it to take you to any one of the other quadrants of the Vulcanverse. It will drop you off and then return to this place. You can return to use it again. There is nothing else here for you, so will you:

Use the chariot ► **497**
Go north to the mountains ► **226**
Go east ► **521**
Go west to the Sacred Way ► **474**
Go south ► **117**

258

You throw the **harpy's egg** to one side of the chamber where it cracks open, spilling out its precious contents – well, to harpies at any rate. Cross it off your possessions.

The maggots swarm *en masse*, fighting amongst themselves in their desire to feed upon it, for it is far more nourishing then the flesh of the long dead, leaving you an easy way out of the chamber. You run past, following the river tunnel onward.

► **589**

259

You sing a beautiful soaring song of the nightingale. Apollo must have heard your prayer for, incredibly, it works! The strixes stay rooted to their perches, eyes closed, listening. You sneak in through the broken door, to find a massive heap of bones and stinking strix guano. The smell is terrible, it is all you can do to keep singing without choking. But the strixes have indeed collected some treasures from their victims. You find two **lava gems**, 250 pyr, some **copper ore** and an **iron key**.

However, you also get covered in strix guano, a vile stink indeed. Note that you have **stink x 1.** Your next CHARM roll is at −1. After that is resolved, the smell wears off, and you can cross the 'item' off. When you are done, you leave this place.

► **564**

260

You pull the lever and are instantly shifted across time and space so suddenly it makes you ill. You find yourself standing in the Black Bayou. There is a rancid smell in the air and that, along with the violent speed of your journey, makes you throw up. Wiping your mouth, you look around.

► **273**

261

To your consternation, it seems that the mummified corpse of Midas has lost his touch. All the magic has been used up, you can no longer turn anything to gold. Ah well, you've made a tidy sum out of it already.

If you have some **golden wine of Dionysus** ► 380

If not, there is nothing more you can do here but leave ► 76

262

As your hand closes around the long shaft of silver inlaid with patterns of gold, tendrils of darkness, like wisps of night, close around your hand. Just then, as if sensing what has happened, two figures burst into the room – Agamemnon and his son Orestes. They are shades, spectres, but they have a dark energy about them. It seems they are more than just apparitions. Bearded, grizzled, strong, Agamemnon looks every inch a king, even in death.

'What are you doing!' shouts Agamemnon, 'drop it, drop my sceptre now!'

Orestes steps forward, spear at the ready but you raise the sceptre as if to break it across your knee. Agamemnon's spectral eyes widen in terror and he pulls his son back.

'Wait, wait,' he says, 'I can give you power, wealth – a villa even. Just hand me the sceptre and I swear by Ares, Artemis, Apollo and Athena that I will gift you land here in Elysium and a chest full of gems, may the gods strike me down if I lie. Just give it back!'

A pregnant silence fills the room. It is as if the gods, the titans and even the Vulcanverse itself are listening, awaiting your decision. Will you:

Break the sceptre ► **138**
Give it back to Agamemnon ► **715**
Keep it for yourself ► **7**

263

You have already visited the Weeping Rock, the tragic remains of Niobe, whose children were slain by the gods. You drank of her tears. There is nothing more for you to do in this sorrowful place, so you move on. ► **60**

264

You pull the lever and are thrown across the world to come to a bone-juddering crash in the far north-west of Hades, close to the mountains of Boreas.

► **226**

265

You have returned to the artist Apelles. He has expanded his space a little, now it is more like an outdoor studio. Given that it never rains in Hades, why not?

‘Greetings, adventurer,’ says Apelles. ‘I’m running low on supplies. If you can bring me canvas and paints I will knock up a masterpiece for you!’

If you have a **roll of canvas** and a **box of paints** and give them to Apelles ► **437**

If not, there is nothing more for you here, time to move on. Will you head:

North ► **60**
West ► **330**
South-west ► **504**
South to the Phlegethon ► **169**
South-east ► **193**

266

You notice that his axe hangs down from his saddle on Daisy's left flank. Its sharpened edge is covered in a leather wrap but you are able to pull that off with your hands, and use the edge to cut the ropes around your wrists without your captor noticing.

You are able to find your weapon stashed in a saddle-bag, and, sitting up behind the champion, drive it deep into his neck, slaying him instantly.

And then to your surprise, horse and rider dissolve into black ashes, leaving you to fall to the ground, all your stuff clattering down around you.

You hear a faint ghostly voice on the wind, 'I, like you, cannot be so easily slain, mortal hero…'

You sigh. Sounds like he'll be back. Gain the codeword ***Nemesis***. Time to move on. You find yourself at the foothills of a volcano in the eastern parts of Hades.

► **405**

267

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 707 immediately. If not, read on.

You step up to the entrance. The hand prints seem to be of some kind of greenish sap. From inside, grief-stricken wails emanates.

You step into the tomb. The walls are covered in a mural of a tragic Arcadian woodland scene – a dryad weeps over the body of a young man, and then retreats to her tree. A later scene shows woodland nymphs pulling at their hair and clothes in a forest funeral, satyrs, heads bowed in grief, carry a bier upon which rests the body of a dryad.

In the middle of the room a hunched figure is rocking back and forth, sobbing. Her hair is a tangled mass of brambles, her clothes more like leaves than robes. She turns and looks up at you. You recognize Karya the dryad, who sent you on a mission to Hades to bring back her lost love, Davides. But he never wanted her love...

'Karya! What happened!' you ask.

The dryad sobs, her hands held over her face dropping to reveal long, twig-like fingers.

'I could not bear to live without him, so I… you were there, you know I tried to join him here, but still he rejects me!'

'I remember, but perhaps if you had not forced his love...,' you say.

She nods. 'I know that now, but I was a dryad, to us mortals are but passing fancies – until I fell in love with one. Now all I have is sorrow and the anguish of bitter heartbreak, so I must abide here, forever mourning my lost love.'

'Is there anything I can do?' you ask.

'No, no… there is nothing… nothing but suffering in this house of woe…' she mutters.

If you have some **Lethe water**, the waters of forgetfulness, and offer it to her ► 794

If not ► 575

268

‘Eighteen, obviously,’ you say with false bravado.

‘Wrong! It’s twelve,’ says the bronze face gleefully.

‘Twelve!’ shouts Deucalion immediately.

‘What? No, that’s... oh bother,’ says the door. ‘Oh dear, well, umm... that’s right, it’s just... well, don’t tell anyone about this, OK?’

You both nod. Then the face grimaces as the great iron doors slowly grind open, splitting the bronze gorgon in two. You and Deucalion step through the into a corridor beyond. Behind you, the iron doors close shut with an ominous clang. There is no way back.

► **512**

269

You have returned to the lair of Wolfshadow, the invulnerable undead demon-wolf of Hades. Lykaon of Arcadia, king of the wolves, told you how to kill Wolfshadow with the **golden arrow of Artemis**. Do you have it with you?

Yes ► **171**
No ► **379**

270

‘Here,’ you say, ‘this will make you forget,’ and you hand her the bottle.

‘Really?’ rasps the shade.

‘Yes, it is water from the river Lethe, the river of oblivion.’

Without hesitation, she takes the vial and drinks it down. Cross off a ‘charge’. If that was the last draft, do not cross the **Lethe Water** off, simply put **x 0** beside it. You may be able to refill it later.

Soon she has forgotten everything and she wanders away. She arrives at the entrance to the chamber of the Furies. As she does, one of them flies down behind her, a bat-winged, wolf-headed monster, presumably to bring her back to her cage. But it just stands there, unmoving, watching her leave. Even the Furies know she has been punished enough, it seems.

You move on. Gain the codeword ***Nasty*** and ► **172**

271

If you have the codeword ***Neophyte*** ► 354 immediately. If not, read on.

If you have the codeword ***Nullify*** ► 417 now. If not, read on.

The last time you were here, you were ambushed by the vampire lamia that makes its lair ‘neath the rune-scribed stone trapdoor, set into the black earthen floor of Hades.

This time you will not be so easily surprised, in fact, you may be able to turn the tables. You secrete yourself behind a scraggly copse of thorny black brambles and wait. You wait, and wait. You are about to give up, when the stone door of the trapdoor grinds upward with a screeching creak, and Davora the lamia slithers her way to the surface, no doubt on the hunt for lost souls to feed upon. This time the tables are indeed quite thoroughly turned, for you leap out of your hiding place with a cry of vengeful rage, taking the lamia completely by surprise. With one fell strike, you lop off her head just like that, snicker snack. Her head falls at your feet, her eyes flick up to look at you – she seems to recognize you and tries to mutter one final curse, but it dies on her lips along with the malicious light in her eyes. Her serpentine body thrashes and twitches in its death throes before it too, falls quiescent.

You congratulate yourself on a job well done. That’s one less evil monster in the world – no longer will she drink the souls of the dead or the blood of the living.

► 187

272

On closer examination, it appears to be a blueprint for the building of a bronze butterfly. It’s quite intricate, but it seems all you need is a decent workbench, like the one here, a **copper cog**, a **brazen trumpet** and one **lava gem**.

If you already have all these items ► **361**

If not, you pocket the blueprint and leave Daedalus’s workshop. You can come back when you have the required items.

► **51**

273

You walk through marshy pathways of withered cypress trees and white poplars that lead to the swampy bayou of Hades until you can walk no further for you have reached the shores of a deep, dark lake.

The underground river, the Lethe, and other tributaries of the Acheron have pooled here, floating up to the surface to form the thin, pitch-black, oily waters called the Black Bayou. Riverside dens and watery graves line its inky waters, punts and flat bottomed funeral barges ply its lakes and waterways, manned by the souls of those drowned at sea.

Hydras are said to live in the bayou, their many heads arguing amongst themselves over the spoils of harvested souls and the fruits of putrefaction and decay. The hydras even have a king, Polykephales, who is said to dwell on an inner island of the bayou.

Nearby, moored to a jetty of ebony, you spot a grand funeral barge, lacquered in shiny black varnish, trimmed with silver. A large catafalque, draped in black velvet, sits amidships. The velvet drape is adorned with the symbol of a poplar tree, picked out in silver thread. A figure on the prow is waving at you. Will you:

Approach the funeral barge ► **192**
Go for a swim ► **127**
Leave ► **796**

274

Suddenly, behind the shade warriors, something huge writhes up out of the water with a screeching roar. It is a massive tentacled creature like an enormous squid the size of a house.

‘Aieee, a kraken!’ screams one of the Argonauts. You step back, weapon at the ready. The kraken reaches for the three warrior shades with multiple tentacles, picks them up as if they were bread sticks and swallows them down, armour and everything, all in a few seconds.

You think you are next but it seems this creature is immune to the memory erasing powers of the Lethe for it is the very same kraken you once fed, and it remembers you. You marvel at how big it has become!

Thankfully, rather than chomping you down like you were a candy snack, the kraken chirrups a greeting. Perhaps it thought it was saving you from the three warrior shades. The creature reaches into the river, and then gently lays down some things at your feet, including a bottle of **Lethe water x3**. It has three doses of the waters of forgetfulness. Do not drink it yourself! It may prove useful elsewhere, however. The kraken also gifts you an **iron spear** and some **fresh fish**. It then clacks with its beak with what really feels like a goodbye, before sinking below the waves of the Lethe and out of sight.

► **357**

275

You approach the well in the forecourt of the farmhouse. As you near, you think you can hear a small scuffling sound, as of something – or someone – moving around down below. You get to the lip of the old, broken well and look down.

There! Down below, eyes, glowing in the pale light. But then they are gone. You are unsure as to whether you even saw them at all.

Climb down the well ► 21

Leave this place ► 412

276

You are dragged down to the bottom of the river to drown in the thick black waters of the Styx. Your shade serves in the underwater court of the goddess as her cup-bearer, singing paeans to her beauty and worshipping at her feet.

After a time, when she thinks you have learned your lesson, she releases you back to the land of the living.

► **111**

277

To your astonishment, the Panoply of the Lost Hero rises up and assembles itself into the form of an invisible warrior. All you can see is the helm, the cuirass, the greaves and the vambraces! The suit of armour steps up to the sealed door and with a click the door slides to the side, as if it somehow recognises it. The panoply steps into the ancient tomb, with you following, jaws agape in amazement.

As you enter into the circular chamber, torches on the wall light up as if by magic, revealing a mural running around the walls but you cannot make out the story it is telling, for it is faded and pitted with age.

In the middle is a funereal dais, upon which lie the mummified remains of what was once a tall, powerfully built woman-warrior. She wears a simple tunic, with an old, rusty shield resting against one side of the dais, and a long spear on the other. You are further astonished to see the panoply begin to fit itself around the ancient corpse, the greaves wrapping themselves around her legs, the vambraces snapping onto her forearms and so on. As they do, so does the shrivelled flesh beneath fill with renewed vigour, the parchment like skin pinking up with blood, the eyes forming in the yellowed skull, muscles filling out.

You step back, hand on your weapon, as the murals around the wall are also restored to their former glory. And now you can see in pictures the tale of the Lost Hero.

► **803**

278

The throne room is eerily quiet. There are no spectral courtiers, no lost souls petitioning the gods, all is as silent as the grave.

Will you:

Leave via the double doors ► 213
Sit on the throne ► 54
Investigate the ‘sun dial’ ► 200

279

Your mother holds the coins tight, but she is pitifully weak in her old age. You take them from her as she once took sharp objects from your pudgy baby fingers.

‘I have deeds I must do in the wider world,’ you tell her. ‘The gods know this is little enough coin to get me started, but it is better to set out even with old shoes than to go barefoot.’

Record 20 pyr (the currency of the Vulcanverse) on your Adventure Sheet, then ► **753**

280

‘I have this winged chariot,’ you say airily, as if it were an everyday thing.

‘What? What do you mean a winged chariot?’ stutters Lampeto.

‘You know, a winged chariot. Pulled through the sky by fire-snorting bronze bulls. Built by Vulcan for Poseidon. Who gave it to Pelops, who then… well, anyway. Now it’s mine. I can fly you to the mountains of Boreas.’

Lampeto stares at you for a moment, her eyes dark pools of wonder.

‘Remarkable,’ she mutters.

You shrug. ‘Top adventurer,’ you say by way of an explanation.

‘Modest too, eh! Anyway, so you can fly us there?’

You nod. ‘I have it moored up in the far north-west.’

‘Well, then, let’s go.’

► **110**

281

You are able to resolve matters by simply proposing that you toss a coin, and the loser backs up. Pintner the vintner calls heads, Cimon the pie-man tails. Cimon loses, and starts swearing in a near stream of astonishing crude, rude and disgusting invective, but you end up being impressed by his knowledge of curse words.

However, he honours the agreement and start backing his cart up. Pintner goes on by, a smug look on her face, whilst Cimon glowers.

‘Thanks’ she says, and hands you a small jug of wine. But, as you suspected, it has already turned to vinegar. Still, note the **vinegar of Hades** on your Adventure Sheet. Cimon also thanks you, and gives you a pie – a rotten, smelly pie. Note down the **maggoty pie** too. Anyway, the way is now clear.

► **301**

282

You assemble a rather clever contraption with a bucket seat for you to sit in and a lever nearby to launch yourself into space. You pull the lever, and with a cry of terror, lob yourself across the abyssal gulf that is the River of Stars.

But you have miscalculated the power required to get you across, and you plunge into the endless dark falling and falling for ever and ever. Eventually you die of thirst, but not without seeing the most amazing things – comets, stars, planets, asteroids and all the astonishing wonders of the heavens. Even though you have died out here in the vastness of space, death is not the end for you are still in the Vulcanverse.

► **111**

283

You hand over the honey and grain – cross them off your Adventure Sheet.

‘Excellent,’ says Perseus happily, ‘honey and grain from Arcadia too, the good stuff!’

He disappears out the back, and some time later emerges with a **honey cake**. Note it on your Adventure Sheet.

For every **pomegranate honey** and **farmland grains** you bring to Perseus, he will bake you one **honey cake**. You can do that now, if you have more than one each of the honey and grain.

Three **honey cakes**, when consumed, will cure one wound: cross off the **honey cakes** and untick your Wound box if you do so. Alternatively, you can sell the **honey cakes** at certain shops – and there may be other uses.

When you are done ► 75

284

‘But first, before we cook the flesh, we must drain it of all that blood,’ says Mormo, smacking her lips. ‘Goodbye my pretty, it’s been nice.’

She bares her fangs, leans down, sinks her teeth into your neck and begins to drink you up. You struggle, but cannot break your bonds no matter how hard you try. Slowly you weaken, until death frees you from this horror. Yet even this is not truly the end, not for you.

► 111

285

In your haste, you drop your flint and tinder. The bramble beast whips a thorn-encrusted limb across your chest, ripping it open. Tick your Wound box. If you were wounded already, then this second wound is fatal, and you bleed out in the Garden of Persephone – at least your blood will feed her plants. ► **111**. If you were previously unwounded, read on.

You stagger back, but are able to retrieve your flint and tinder and this time you are able to get a fire going. The dry weeds and thickets catch alight in moments. The fire spreads like a flood, and soon the Garden of Persephone is engulfed in flames. The bramble beast goes up in a great pillar of fire, like an enormous torch. You step back, shielding your face from the heat. Even the pavilion goes up in flames, and soon all that is left is ash and embers, smouldering under the pale grey sky of Hades.

You grimace. Perhaps that was a little too effective. Could there be anything left in the burnt-out remains of the pavilion? Gain the title **The Gardener** and ► **332**

286

The spiderling speaks in a throaty hiss, ‘Is that human meat I smell? What are you doing here – did you get out of your cocoon somehow, little human?’

She scuttles around, her spider claws rattling on the stone floor, trying to make out where the smell is coming from. Her face is hideous – two eyes like a human but with the mouth parts of a spider, and a bony crest over a gnarled human-like skull.

Charge! ► **385**

Stay hidden ► **128**

Step out and introduce yourself ► **443**

287

You are at the old haunted farmhouse. The sign at the entrance has sagged a little more now, but it still says ‘Exagorazo’. The farmhouse itself has crumbled away almost entirely, there are only low walls and rubble left. The well is choked with mud and dust. A faint wind brings the sound of the whispering dead to your ears.

There is nothing here for you so you head back to the Plains of Howling Darkness.

► **412**

288

The clockwork owl flutters up to deliver another warning. Just as well, as suddenly the two fat statues pivot at the hips, and both bellies shoot forward, trying to crush you between them.

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 6. Forewarned is forearmed as they say.

Succeed ► **525**

Fail ► **453**

289

You have come to the Gate of Tears, a huge, towering portico of dark granite. Carved into it are myriad faces – mothers, fathers, monsters, demons, dryads, centaurs and so on. All of them animated by the magic of death, as if they were alive, all of them crying a river of tears.

'Ah, it is you, the mortal hero, welcome.'

Roll a die. If you score a six ► **177** immediately. If not, read on.

'Of course, *you* may pass.' says Charon.

You can go:

East into the desert ► **686** in *The Hammer of the Sun*

South into the desert ► **400** in *The Hammer of the Sun*

North to the southern gate of Vulcan City ► **555** in *Workshop of the Gods*

South on the Sacred Way ► **72**

West into Hades ► **193**

290

With Trapjaw out of the way, you relight the torches set around the walls, and put your butterfly back in your backpack. In the centre of this chamber is a large sarcophagus of marble. On closer inspection you see that is is the tomb of Icarus, the son of Daedalus who made magical wings for them both, but Icarus flew too high and the sun melted the special wax with which the wings were attached, and so it was that Icarus fell to his death.

Opening the sarcophagus reveals the long dead remains of Icarus, but also the famous wings, set on either side of his mummified corpse. You take them. Note the **wings of Icarus** on your Adventure Sheet. Gain the codeword ***Numb***.

You also find amongst the grave goods left around his tomb 100 pyr, a magnetic **lodestone** and a small tub of **Iaso's balm** (can be used to remove 1 scar).

You have completed one of the great labours of Hades. Write the number **631** in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet (in place of the number already written there, if any) and then ► **600**

291

Last time, the goddess Styx herself appeared before you in all her glory. She does not manifest herself now, but you can feel her presence like a rushing river through your consciousness.

‘Give the river something, just a token to show respect,’ mutters the bargeman.

Throw 25 pyr into the water ► **685**

Give nothing but a sneer ► **71**

292

Together they are too much for you, and beat you into submission. You are wounded – put a tick in the Wound box. If you were already wounded, gain 1 scar instead.

The shade warriors honour your valour, however, and, content with victory, they depart without taking anything more from you. What use have they for money or possessions? You pick yourself up and dust yourself off. You find nothing else of interest in the Mourning Fields and decide to return to the city to recuperate.

► **10**

293

You return to Lampeto’s hut in the Asphodel Meadows. The three faces of the shades light up at the sight of you – well, if it were possible that the hollow-eyed, phantasmal faces of such tormented spectres could be said to light up.

‘Have you found a way of getting us out of here?’ asks Lampeto excitedly, in a voice like howling winds in the distance.

If you have the codewords ***Nervous*** or ***Nought*** ► **280**

If not, but you have the title **Spider’s Bane** ► **737**

If not, but you have an **iron key** ► **677**

If you have none of these, read on.

‘I’m afraid not,’ you say.

‘Then why have you returned?’ thunders Lampeto. ‘What kind of adventurer are you? Begone and stop wasting our time!’

You take your leave, muttering under your breath about how all they’ve got is time and maybe they should be more grateful for that.

► **505**

294

You sail on and come to a fork in the river. Northward, the black waters roll on, to the east they disappear into clouds of smoke and steam. Through intermittent gaps in the smoke you spot leaping flames!

‘What is down there?’ you ask.

‘The river Phlegethon, called the river of fire or the flaming river.’

‘Where does it go?’

‘Onward, and then down underground into the fires of Tartarus, beneath the volcano of Thanatos, the mountain of death.’ As if reading your mind, the bargeman adds, ‘I will not take you there, never, ever. You will have to find your own way.’

Will you:

Continue north on the Styx ► **793**

Disembark here ► **504**

295

It isn’t long before you realise your attacks are having no effect at all. Wolfshadow is invulnerable to all your weapons… You have no choice but to try and break off and flee. As you turn to run, Wolfshadow savages your arm with his teeth. You gasp in agony.

If you were already wounded ► **704**

If not, you are now; tick your Wound box. You stagger away and make a run for it ► **91**

296

Zoë heaves a despairing sigh. ‘So predictable,’ she mutters. She doesn’t even bother to defend herself as your first strike hits home. Your blow just clangs harmlessly off her skin of solid gold. It does however, cut her white mantle in two.

‘My lovely shawl!’ she booms. ‘You’ll pay for that.’

And with that, she swings a golden fist at your head. You duck under it fairly easily but it soon becomes apparent that there is nothing you can do to damage her dense, golden skin. One clubbing blow from her fist could take you down in an instant, should it connect.

You realise you are now fighting for the chance to escape. Make a STRENGTH or GRACE roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **709**

Fail ► **633**

297

The river throws up a shower of fish into the air. Lots of them fall down onto the deck for you to collect if you want. Note up to three units of **fresh fish** on your Adventure Sheet.

Where to now?

Disembark and east ► **51**

Disembark and south-west ► **228**

Disembark and north-west ► **273**

Continue upriver by barge ► **364**

298

You come to a massive stone portal of black granite, the Penthus Gate. Penthus is the god of grief and sadness, called Heartbreaker, or Grief Giver, or Tear Maker, He who Laments in Darkness. Friezes picked out in white and red adorn the portico, depicting scenes of lost love, remorse, tragedy, heartache and death. Grim stuff. You step forward to pass through the gates.

If you have the title **Grief Stricken** ► **66**

If not, you find that the Penthus Gate will not open for you**.** You cannot enter, so ► **10** and choose again.

299

Hydna drops you on the hill island with the burning wheel atop it. It's actually an easy matter to extinguish the flames with the black waters of the bayou, and cut Ixion free. He slumps to the ground in astonishment. He staggers to his feet, staring at his arms and legs, not quite believing they are not on fire. And then he stares at you... and giggles insanely. He leers at you salaciously – so rudely, in fact, that you draw your weapon. And then he capers off, laughing and shrieking maniacally. His suffering has driven him mad.

And you have indeed offended the gods by freeing him – lose all blessings if you have any. Hydna refuses to take you to any of the other hills for fear of bringing the disfavour of the gods upon herself. You could swim to them but you know the bayou is infested with tentacled horrors and how would you get out after without Hydna's barge? Time to say your farewells to Hydna and leave the Black Bayou.

► **796**

300

Write the number **28** in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet (in place of the number already written there, if any) and then ► 772

301

From the bridge over the Acheron, you can travel:

- North to the Gate of Ivory ► **454**
- West ► **521**
- East ► **237**
- South to the Necropolis ► **696**
- South along the riverbank ► **588**

302

The bargeman eyes your offering with trepidation. You pour out the food at the feet of the goddess.

‘What, you think this paltry offering, fit only to create mortal dung, is a worthy offering to me, to Styx, the greatest river in Hades? You insult me, mortal!’

‘No, no, my lady,’ you protest but it is too late.

‘Bah,’ she bellows, ‘how dare you!’ With that she sinks into the river and in doing so, creates a great wave that engulfs the barge, washing you off the deck. You plunge into the black waters. The bargeman recovers quickly, and flees, abandoning you to your fate, punting his barge back upriver.

It feels like something is tugging at your legs, drawing you down into the depths.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **826**

Fail ► **276**

303

The clockwork owl flutters up out of your backpack with a whirr, spins its head right round and drops back down. What the – ?

There is a sudden click and from both sides of the arch way, stylized – and lethally sharp – bronze claws slash out at you. Fortunately you were alerted by the owl!

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► **815**

Fail ► **46**

304

Tick the Wound box on your Adventure Sheet. If you were already wounded ► **81** immediately. If not, read on.

You mistime your dodge and take a painful gash across your arm, but at least you're still alive. As it rears back, you counter attack. Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► **196**

Fail ► **256**

305

You walk across the shadowed land of Hades. Off to the east looms the mighty volcano of Thanatos, he who is death. To the north and west, you can make out the steaming Slimeswamp and in the far off north you can just make out the tall hill near the middle of Hades, where lies the city of the dead. Ashes fall like rain. Is it the effluvia of the volcano or the ashes of the cremated dead?

Nearby, you can see a tumulus or burial mound, with a stone pillared doorways set into its earthen side. Will you go:

East to the volcano ► **405**
West to the Slimeswamp ► **25**
North to the mountains ► **60**
Investigate the tumulus ► **249**

306

The Sacred Way is a huge road that surrounds all the quadrants, made of paved stone. You are at its southernmost point in Hades. To the west is the Delta of Darkness; to the north are open plains. You notice a tall black tower, one of many scattered across the underworld, near the road to the north east. Black shapes are flying around its high turrets. Birds of some kind, but as this is the underworld, you can be fairly certain they aren't doves or nightingales. Will you:

Investigate the tower ► **125**
Go east along the way ► **731**
Go west to the delta ► **493**
North to the plain ► **537**

307

Gain the codeword ***Noisome***.

The cavernous underground space falls silent, save for the rushing of the waters. You take the time to sort through the three Argonauts' gear and find 50 pyr, a **recurve bow** and a scroll. It's a note from an Argonaut called Ancaeus: 'Trying to put the old crew together, meet me in the mountains, the pillars of the sky. You know where...'

You also find a bottle of **Lethe water x3**. It has three doses of the waters of forgetfulness. Do not drink it yourself! It may prove useful elsewhere, however.

The river Lethe comes up out of the ground into this great cavern, and disappears back into the earth further on. There is nowhere else you can go from here, so you return to the delta.

► **493**

308

You try to run as fast and as nimbly as you can around the edge of the chamber, skirting past the roiling mass of maggots at the centre. As you start your run, the maggots sense your presence, and start to swarm in your direction. Fresh meat!

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 9.

Succeed ► **736**

Fail ► **507**

309

‘All I wanted was your love, mother!’ wails the apparition, readying her dagger for another strike. ‘Why couldn’t you give it to me?’

Shadowy strands of night crowd around you, clouding your vision.

If you have 3 or more scars ► **594**; otherwise read on.

Quickly you try to sing her a lullaby. Perhaps that will calm this vengeful spirit. Make a CHARM roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **561**

Fail ► **791**

310

You say nothing and hand the document to Aspasia. She opens it up and gasps.

‘Look, it is indeed signed by Socrates and Plato! Incredible!’ She passes it around the group. They are suitably bamboozled, the names are so similar, they buy it, hook, line and sinker.

‘Well then, it’s clear. The proposition is proved. All motion is meaningless!’ says Protagoras.

‘Well, not necessarily, one could argue that in the case of this single arrow, the proposition is true, but not for all arrows. We still need more evidence,’ says Xenophanes.

‘Although perhaps the journey that was undertaken to get this affidavit is the more interesting tale from which we can learn,’ says Cleanthes. ‘Tell us the tale, adventurer.’

You tell them about the Inn of the White Poplars, how you had to get the blessed earth of Arcadia, about Helen the innkeeper and the experiment with Sacrotes and Plota. You are careful not to directly say their names, and skirt over parts, and throw in some other tales of derring-do.

The philosophers are enthralled, and soon fall to arguing about what lessons should be learned from your tale. Until Aristippus looks up at you, and reminds the group that you are an adventurer and that convention dictates you should get a reward for this contribution to the sum of philosophical knowledge.

‘Oh yes, of course,’ says Aspasia.

► **242**

311

The golden dog is hard to damage, and it manages to sink its bronze teeth into your leg, holding you in place, giving Tantalus enough space and time to shove a short spear through your chest. You sink to your knees. Death is near. ‘I’ll be back,’ you mutter through gritted teeth.

► **111**

312

The lamia’s face is a mask of bloodlust and greed, as she swipes at you with her iron-black talons.

You try to spin away.

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **34**

Fail ► **220**

313

‘Hrumph,’ grumps the silver minotaur face, ‘you’re right. Too easy! I did tell ‘em these questions should have been more difficult.’

‘Who’s they?’ you ask.

‘Never you mind,’ says the silver face, ‘You can pass, just be content with that.’ The great iron doors rumble open and you step through to the other side.

► **394**

314

You hang back in the shadows of the longhouse. The Children of Arachne swarm after the fleeing prisoners, leaving the area around the temple deserted. Not a spider is to be seen. You are able to enter the temple of Arachne undetected. ► **540**

315

Your singing is so awful, they attack immediately – one shoots at you with his bow, forcing you to duck, whilst the other steps in and whacks you around the head with the end of his spear. You fall senseless to ground.

You wake up to find you have been robbed. Cross off all of your cash and **lava gems**, if you had any. You can see them capering off into the distance, crying, ‘We’re rich, we’re rich, the taverns of Arcadia here we come!’

A setback for sure, but perhaps you can recover. Time to move on. Will you go:

North ► **51**
South ► **537**
West ► **228**
South-east to the Slimeswamp ► **38**
Follow the river north-east ► **504**

316

You offer her the **Lethe water**. ‘This is a vial of water from the river Lethe, the waters of forgetfulness. If you drink of it, all your memories will be lost, it will be like oblivion, you will forget who you were, what your purpose is. But you will be free.’

‘I accept!’ she says immediately, and takes the vial. She gulps it down. Cross off a charge If it the charges are all used up, do not cross the **Lethe Water** off, simply put **x 0** beside it. You may be able to refill it later.

Zoë stares at you for a moment. ‘Nothing is happening,’ she says. And then the waters begin to dribble out of her.

‘It’s not working!’ she bellows angrily. You have to cover your ears, for the sound is like ten trumpets blasting out at once. She crosses her golden arms with a clang. ‘Of course it’s not working, for my insides are of gold too. I haven’t actually eaten or drunk anything for centuries.’

You sigh, bemoaning the loss of such a valuable potion.

‘I’m sorry,’ she says, ‘I should have known. Still, thank you for trying.’ What now?

Try **Aphrodite’s kiss** ► 747

You don’t have that or don’t wish to use it ► 466

317

You clamber to a high point and dive in, cutting the water like a knife blade. Broken crystals of sunlight dance in the stream as you surface.

‘Wow. I wish I could do that.’

‘I can teach you.’ You look around. ‘Actually, not here. It’s too shallow. You might hurt yourselves.’

‘*Please…*’

With a sigh you pretend to relent. ‘All right, let’s move a few hundred yards that way where the water’s a bit deeper.’

After you’ve been coaching them for a few minutes, they start to lose interest. Little kids have the attention span of gnats. You leave them cavorting in the stream and go back to your favourite spot.

Write your attributes on the Adventure Sheet:

STRENGTH 0
GRACE +1
CHARM 0
INGENUITY 0

Then ► **679**

318

You pull the lever. One moment you are standing near the throne of Hades, the next on a wild mountain side in the far north, near the Mountains of Boreas.

► 454

319

You burrow deep into a pile of nearby ashes. Wolfshadow races up and starts sniffing around. You tense as he nears your hiding place, sniffing hard and fast. You clamp your hand over your nose as a sneeze starts to build up from the dust, but then you hear a raucous blast of the sound of a rockfall – it is Wolfshadow sneezing! Soon he gives up and heads away. It is safe enough for you to come out and investigate the nearby mounds if you wish.

► **608**

320

You are no match for Mormo, the terrible vampire lamia. She swings her massive axe at you whilst assailing you with her lashing tail from the other side. Her tail knocks you to the ground and before you've even hit the ground, she's lopped off your head with the axe. The last thing you hear her say is, 'Hah! That one's for the gods too!'

And yet that is still not the end for you, for you are indeed favoured by the gods. Or perhaps the gods are desperate.

► **111**

321

The last time you were here you fought the bramble beast and it looks like the garden has regrown itself. The brambles, weeds and thorns rise up once more, reaching for you writhing and twisting up together, drawing in more and more weeds, shrubs and roots to form another monstrous beast of thorns and brambles.

Will you:

Try to hack your way through once again ► **399**

Set fire to the garden ► **455**

322

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 199 immediately; otherwise read on.

The basket rocks its way up to the barge and bumps into the bow. You reach down and pick it up. Inside you find a sleeping baby, swaddled in cotton, a real human baby, not a shade or a ghost or a demon!

‘Silver or gold, you said,’ mutters the bargeman.

‘Some would say a baby is like gold,’ you reply.

‘Hah, hah, the fools!’ His laughter sounds like the sawing of wood.

You blink uncertainly. You are going to have to look after it, you can’t abandon a human child alone in Hades. Mind you, someone else did but who? Note on your Adventure Sheet that you have a **baby in a basket**.

Time to move on ► 294

323

If you have the codeword ***Nautilus*** ► **248** immediately. If not, read on.

Suddenly there is a loud crunching sound, and the bargeman cries, ‘Aieee, the kraken!’ The last time this happened it was but a baby – but it has grown considerably since then. Not only that, you chopped off one of its tentacles. The kraken is still not fully grown but it is three times the size of a man, and it is angry. It appears to remember you too, for it fixes you with its coal black cuttlefish eyes and reaches for you with its tentacles.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **687**

Fail ► **173**

324

You notice some light behind you. It is the antechamber with the two pot-bellied statues. Perhaps if you can make it there, you can get away. Desperately, you begin a limping run to the light. Behind you, daemon in the darkness laughs loudly, ‘You think you can outrun me in the dark, you fool!’

Fortunately, his gloating mockery has given you a head start. You hobble on as fast as you can. Heavy footfalls sound behind you – it is chasing you. You risk a look over your shoulder. In the pale light from the antechamber you can make out a hideous form. The head is human-like, but pale grey with three short sharp horns on either side of its hairless skull, red glowing eyes, fangs, claws – and massive, snapping jaws of bone where its chest should be. A hideous monstrosity from the depths of hell. With a terrified whimper you hurry on.

Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 9.

Succeed ► **584**

Fail ► **99**

325

You have come to the north eastern edge of Hades, where it comes up against the cyclopean walls of Vulcan City. They rise up and up, impossible to climb over. To the north and south rise impassable mountains. Nearby, there is what looks like a low altar and a kind of hunters' lodge next to it. Grey ash falls out of the gloomy sky like snow. Whistling winds from out of the mountains blow the ash up against the walls, leaving several piled-up mounds of dusty ash.

Will you:

Follow the wall north ► **713**

Head west ► **237**

Investigate the altar ► **369**

Examine the mounds of ash ► **608**

326

You run for your life, heading for some gnarled trees to the east, but the champion of death rides you down and clubs you to the ground with the reverse edge of his axe, knocking you unconscious.

You wake to find that you've been thrown over the hindquarters of Death Dealer's horse. You have been bound hand and foot and gagged.

Up ahead looms the volcano of death, where it is said there is an entrance to the Tartarus, the home of Thanatos.

'Won't be long now, Daisy, we're nearly there,' mutters Death Dealer in a gentle but nevertheless doom-laden whisper as he pats his horse's neck.

Daisy? Did he really call her that? Or are you suffering from some kind of concussion?

Anyway, you examine your bonds. Maybe you can get out of this.

Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **266**

Fail ► **623**

327

You'd almost made it to the side of the bridge, but you are not fast enough, and Wolfshadow bites you in the leg. If you were already wounded ► 729 immediately. If not, read on.

Tick the Wound box on your sheet. Wolfshadow is busy swallowing the nugget of flesh he has just ripped out of your leg. Even though you are in agony, you take that moment to dive over the side of the bridge. ► 593

328

If you have the codeword ***Nihilism*** ► **565** immediately.

It seems the philosophers' picnic is still going on.

'Greetings,' says Aspasia, who is still seated in the chair, whilst the others lounge around the rug at her feet. 'As you can see, we are still testing Protagoras the Sophist's hypothesis that all things come to those who wait.'

'Bit bored to be honest, also, I'm starving,' says Aristippus the Cyrenaic.

'Still, we must endure,' says Cleanthes the Stoic.

'To find the clearer truth, evidence is all,' says Xenophanes, in a reedy whisper. He looks at least ninety years old.

If you have a **Summer Palace picnic hamper** and wish to lay it out on the rug before them, ► **647**

If not ► **165**

329

You stride up to the tower, shouting your defiance, hoping to scare the cowardly strixes away, but it is one thing to give up on some too dangerous prey, it is another to defend your nest.

The strixes swoop down, and although you kill a few more they do not give up this time. They swarm over you, and you are savagely pecked and sliced.

Tick the Wound box on your Adventure Sheet. If you were already wounded, then death is swift, for they slice you up, drink your blood and eat your eyeballs ► **111**; if not, read on.

You beat a hasty retreat, and the strixes, having lost a few more of their number, are happy to let you go. You leave this place ► **564**

330

You are walking by the banks of the Styx.
Will you go:

- North ► 237
- To the City of the Dead ► 696
- South along the river ► 504
- North-east to the mountains ► 60
- West ► 458
- South-west ► 51
- South-east to the land between the Phlegethon and Styx ► 711

331

You manage to twist yourself around onto her back, where you wrap your legs around her torso and your arms around her neck. She tries to knock you off with great blows of her serpentine tail, but you hold on grimly, choking the life out of her. Finally, she falls to the ground. You grab your stuff and finish the job by lopping off her head.

Gain the codeword ***Neutralised***.

On her body you find 100 pyr. Also, you are able to extract some **lamia venom**. Note it on your Adventure Sheet. You look around her lair. Like her sister, she has a shelf with the skull trophies of her victims each also labelled. You read a few.

‘Here lies Morish, his brain was the size of a walnut.’

‘Rosalinda, barbarian from the far north – tasted of sour milk.’

‘Antocles – wounded me, so I roasted him alive.’

‘Dione. Might have been the daughter of a God, for her blood was simply divine.’

And so on. You search further and find a vial of blood, labelled ‘**Dione’s Blood**’. Note it among your possessions and then ► **678**

332

The pavilion has been burnt down to its foundations. You root through the ashes. After a while, you find a beaten copper manhole cover, set into the ground with a relief on the lid showing Hades and Persephone sitting on their thrones in the underworld. It looks a little blackened but otherwise seems fine. However, try as you might, you cannot open it but around the base, you see these words:

'My first is darkness, a son of chaos
My second is the Styx, the Acheron, and
the Lethe, amongst others
My third are the mountain nymphs
My fourth speaks in riddles
My whole is love
Who am I?'

Take the first letter of your answer, give it its corresponding number in the alphabet, add them all together and turn to that paragraph. If it is correct, it will say so, if not, return here and think again.

If you cannot solve the puzzle, you will have to go back and return here another day. ► **237**

333

You walk up the grey, stone-paved walkway, lined with columns upon which rest statues of the honoured dead – Achilles, Hector, Heracles, and so on. Then they become bigger and grander, topped with statues of the Olympian gods until you reach the Palace of the Dead itself, the entrance of which is flanked by two enormous statues of Hades and his consort Persephone, the rulers of the underworld. There is no door as such. There was no need of a door; Hades himself holds full dominion over all the shades of the dead, there are none that could withstand his command here in his realm.

But you are not one of the dead and Hades sleeps so you simply walk into the great palace.

► **213**

334

The box is wooden, engraved with satyrs and dryads dancing in a woodland glade, and is in surprisingly good condition. Inside you find only one thing – a tattered child's doll of cloth and straw, clearly a relic of happier times.

Take the **child's doll** ► 243

Leave the farmhouse ► 412

335

You jury-rig a quick fishing rod from white poplar wood and a makeshift hook and walk out onto the ice. Who knows what you will find? Roll a die.

score 1: ► **569**

score 2-3: some **fresh fish**

score 4-5: a worthless blue cap that you throw back into the water

score 6: a pouch of 20 pyr

You can fish here as many times as you like, rolling a dice each time. When you are ready to leave ► **586**

336

Write the number **207** in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet (in place of the number already written there, if any) and then ► **568**

337

You pull the lever. There is a clunking sound and nothing happens. You pull it again – this time you are teleported instantaneously to the Sacred Way in the far south of Hades. Or at least your top half is… you look down in horror to see your legs are missing! But then a split second later, they appear, thankfully joined up to the rest of you. You collapse in a heap having had the fright of your life. Well, in your case one of many frights of your life, but anyway. ► **306**

338

You have returned to the mountains of the north-west, in search of, perhaps, the shrine of Aphrodite. Unfortunately, there has been a rockfall since you were here last, and the shrine has been buried under a landslide of rubble.

► 752

339

The spiders swarm over you, bundling you up in a web of sticky, slimy spider silk. Soon you are cocooned so much you can barely move. You can feel yourself being taken somewhere, and then all the blood rushes to your head – you're being hung upside down like a side of meat in a butcher's shop, to be eaten – or perhaps planted – later.

Fortunately, you can move a little, and you are able to open up a bottle of some **vinegar of Hades**. It drips down and slowly dissolves the slimy spider webbing. (Cross the vinegar off your list of possessions). Once the hole is large enough, you drop head first to the ground below. You pick yourself up and look around. You are in a kind of longhouse, made from solidified spider slime-silk by the look of it. The walls are a pallid grey-toned white, striated like bricks made of mud and straw. Several more cocoons hang from the roof. One end of the longhouse is open, and you carefully take a look.

It leads to a large open space of hard packed earth, with a great pillared temple at its centre, the Temple of Arachne. Several more longhouses are dotted around the edges, each presumably also full of cocooned victims.

Something hisses nearby – two spider guards drop down from above, each the size of a man's shield. You must fight them. Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► **231**

Fail ► **445**

340

Your archery is terrible; you fail to hit a single spectral pirate. They close with ease, and swarm onto your barge. There are too many of them to fight, and you are overwhelmed. They push you around a bit, but no more than that, they leave you unharmed. They do, however, take all of your coins. Cross them off your Adventure Sheet. They do not take any of your equipment though. Indeed, they stash the money absent-mindedly, as if they had no real use for it, and have only looted it because that is what they did in life. They return to their barge, and sail away. There is nothing to be done but go on.

► **294**

341

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 456 immediately; otherwise read on.

A figure seems to rise up out of the river and step onto the bridge. It is covered in heavy black robes, face hidden behind a great black cowl. In one hand it holds a long barge-pole of a staff.

‘Greetings mortal,’ it whispers in a grave cold voice, ‘I am Charon, ferryman of the Styx and you must pay the toll.’

‘Yes, lord, of course. I am happy to pay! Two coins, one for each eye, as tradition demands?’ you reply.

‘What? Two? No, no… things… err... ‘tis fifty coins now, mortal!’

Charon is supposed ferry the dead across the Styx to Hades in a barge for a couple of coins, not demand a large toll on a bridge. For one, you are not dead. But then again, things are a little messed up these days.

Pay him 50 pyr ► 359

Challenge him ► 29

342

You call upon Apollo of the silver tongue to aid you, and start your speech, but it seems that Blubberjaw either isn't listening, doesn't care, or is too simple to understand speech, for he just rushes at you with a ravenous roar, trying to wrap his huge, fat arms around you, blubber hanging off them like obscene fruits. You will be baked alive in that hideous hug, despite your fireproof hide. You have no choice but to fight. Unfortunately, Blubberjaw has got the drop on you.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 10.

Succeed ► **637**

Fail ► **538**

343

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ►448 immediately; otherwise read on.

Klytemnestra sits by the baths, sobbing. She turns as you approach.

‘I have defeated Agamemnon,’ you say, ‘he is but a lost shade now, a shadow of himself.’

She gives a half smile. ‘That is good to hear. And what of my son?’

‘He too, is a shadow once more, but I don’t understand, why wasn’t he in Tartarus, the black abyss, for those who commit crimes such as matricide?’

‘Oh, he was judged by the gods, indeed. Athena and Apollo could not decide and the verdict hung in the balance. But in the end, because they believe a man’s life is worth more than a woman’s, so is his vengeance more worthy than a woman’s, and he was acquitted.’

‘And what will you do now?’ you ask.

‘I shall grieve here in the Mourning Fields for ever… unless...’

‘Unless?’

‘You can bring me a draught of the River Lethe, the river of forgetfulness. One drink and I will become but a shadow, yet I will no longer remember this pain, this suffering, the horror of it all. I will be free!’

If you have some **Lethe water** and wish to give her some ► 539; if not, read on.

‘Where is the Lethe?’ you ask.

‘Is it said to run somewhere underground, perhaps in Tartarus itself. But I do not know for sure.’

You take your leave. Perhaps you will be able to alleviate her suffering later.

► 786

344

Perdix, inventor, craftsman, and smelter can perform various tasks for you. If you have some **copper ore**, you can get him to make you a **copper cog** on a one for one basis. For each **copper ore** you cross off, you can get one **copper cog**. This is free of charge, as he doesn't use all the ore to make a cog. You can also buy a few things from him.

	To buy	*To sell*
Brazen trumpet	50 pyr	–
Clockwork owl	50 pyr	–
Vinegar of Hades	20 pyr	15 pyr

When you are done, if you have the title **Lion Slayer** and do not possess the **Nemean bagh nakh** ► 790

If not, there is nothing more for you here so you return to the Asphodel Meadows ► 75

345

Cross the item off your Adventure Sheet. Wolfshadow is chasing you down – you throw the item in his path, and, thank the gods, it works. He stops to feed, and you are able to make your escape by hiding in the piled up ash against the wall of Vulcan City. After he has fed, the hideous beast sniffs around, but the ashes are enough to conceal even your smell and Wolfshadow leaves. It is safe enough for you to come out and investigate the nearby mounds if you wish. ► **608**

346

If you have 3 or more scars ► **820** immediately. If not, read on.

You are travelling on the Sacred Way that runs around and through the whole of the Vulcanverse. Above you, the endless grey skies of Hades blankets the land in a gloomy miasma of despair. From here you can go:

North along the Sacred Way ► **474**
South along the Sacred Way ► **579**
East, inland ► **228**
North-east, inland ► **117**

347

‘You mean the children of the titan, Nyx, she who is the night? She bore many but they include the Erinyes, the Furies, who are sent by the gods to punish the wicked. Then there are the Keres, the black dooms, who devour the bodies of those slain in battle, and the Moirai, the Fates themselves who spin the destinies of gods and men. They are all said to reside in darkness, deep in Tartarus, the heart of Hades.’

► **198**

348

‘Are you sure?’ says Hydna. ‘You might incur the wrath of the gods yourself.’

‘They say the gods sleep, so perhaps they won’t notice.’

‘Well, it’s your funeral, as it were,’ says Hydna. ‘Which hill shall I take you to?’

Sisyphus of the rock ► **721**

Ixion of the burning wheel ► **299**

Salmoneus of the gongs ► **590**

349

Suddenly the two fat statues pivot at the hips, and both bellies shoot forward, trying to crush you between them!

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **525**

Fail ► **453**

350

You enter the tunnel. The iron hatch falls shut behind you and locks itself. The tunnel is roughly hewn out of the dirt, with a simple tamped-down earthen floor. It is very short, running only under the walls to the other side, where you find another locked iron hatch. Your **iron key** also unlocks this. You can go:

Back to Hades ► **713**

Into Vulcan City ► **350** in *Workshop of the Gods*

351

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 742 immediately; otherwise read on.

Your voice is flat, and you garble the words. Indeed, you may have offended the gods with your rendition! Lose any blessings you may already have.

You can leave ► 493 or try again. To do so, make a CHARM roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► 36

Fail ► 742

352

Helen has granted you free use of the Inn of the White Poplars. You can stay here, rest and heal up. Untick your Wound box, if you are wounded. You look around. In one corner, the shade of a bard, playing a lyre, is singing a song. In another, two ghostly forms are in deep discussion. Helen works at the bar but Anchises is nowhere to be seen.

You can buy and sell a few things here at the following prices:

	To buy	*To sell*
honey cake	–	50 pyr
pomegranate wine	–	35 pyr
strix stew	20 pyr	15 pyr
vinegar of Hades	20 pyr	15 pyr

When you are done, you can:

Listen to the bard ► **160**
Talk to Helen ► **574**
Talk to the shades in the corner ► **475**
Leave and head north ► **346**
Leave and head to the delta ► **493**

353

‘That tapestry, amazing craftsmanship, look at the weave-work around there,’ you say, pointing up at a spot behind the spiderling’s head. Without thinking, she turns to look.

‘I know,’ she says, amazing isn’t – ’

Whilst her back is turned, you step in and deftly split her skull in two with a single blow, spraying her brains all over the altar. The spiderling collapses in a twitching heap, folding in on itself in death.

What a feat of arms to slay such a creature with one strike, even if it was a bit, well, backstabby. But then again, cunning is the hallmark of a great hero too, or so they say. If only there were witnesses to record your glorious deed. But then you look around furtively, in case there are – in this case, more spiders. But the temple is quite empty.

You have found the **tapestry of Arachne**. Note it on your Adventure Sheet. Also, give yourself the title **Spider’s Bane**.

You have completed one of the great labours of Hades. Write the number **250** in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet (in place of the number already written there, if any) and then ► **600**

354

You have all three fragments of the binding spell and the eyeball of Typhon, so you are ready to cast the spell that will empower you in some way. You descend into the old lair of Davora the lamia, and approach the shrine. There you prepare yourself, placing the eyeball on the altar and readying the tablets.

And then you intone the words…

As you speak, the tomb falls silent, an expectant hush filling the air. Suddenly the clay tablets explode into tiny shards, spraying your face with dust. And then the dead, nacreous eyeball begins to glow with a fiery red light all of its own.

You stare in horror as it begins to twitch and writhe, as if alive. The hairs on the nape of your neck stand up, as the eye begins to float above the shrine's altar – and suddenly it hurtles towards you like an arrow. You cry out in agonising pain as it burrows its way into one of your sockets, and you fall to the ground, senseless.

► **485**

355

You try to mediate but they both take great umbrage at your interfering.

‘Hey, mind your own business, you busybody!’ says Pintner.

Cimon starts swearing at you with a vile stream of astonishing invective that leaves you amazed that anyone could know that many curse words!

‘We don’t need a snooper sticking their nose in our business,’ are his last words, pretty much the only sentence that is printable. Anyway, they soon start pelting you with wine and pies. The wine has indeed turned to vinegar, and the pie is maggot-ridden and foul-smelling. Note that you have **stink x 1**. Your next CHARM roll is at −1. After that is resolved, the smell wears off and you can cross the ‘item’ off.

As you back away, they sort themselves out, manoeuvre past each other, and head off on their respective ways. At least by directing their anger at you, rather than at each other, you have cleared the path.

► **301**

356

You skirt around the River of Stars looking for another way to get over. You manage to find what looks like the narrowest point. A bowshot might just do it. You could try shooting a couple of arrows with lines attached, and climb across. Or you could build a catapult and fling yourself across.

Use a bow and arrow ► **239**

Build a catapult ► **828**

357

Gain the codeword ***Noisome***.

The cavernous underground space falls silent, save for the rushing of the waters. You take the time to sort through the three Argonauts' gear and find 50 pyr, a **recurve bow** and a scroll. It's a note from an Argonaut called Ancaeus: 'Trying to put the old crew together. Meet me in the mountains, the pillars of the sky. You know where...'

The river Lethe comes up out of the ground into this great cavern, and disappears back into the earth further on. There is nowhere else you can go from here, so you return to the delta.

► **493**

358

A few well-aimed clumps of earth put paid to their fun. They charge up the river bank towards you, mud-spattered and furious, but you have no patience for infant tantrums. You box a few ears, kick a few rears, and the pack of them run crying back to their mothers.

Write your attributes on the Adventure Sheet:

STRENGTH +1
GRACE 0
CHARM 0
INGENUITY 0

Then ► **723**

359

Charon appears surprised for a moment but then holds out a gnarled, skeletal hand. You pass over the coins. Cross them off your Adventure Sheet. Charon stands aside.

'You may pass, mortal,' he says in deep, sepulchral tones. You walk on across the bridge. When you look back, Charon is nowhere to be seen but then you spot a black-robed figure on the other side of the river, hurrying off in the opposite direction. Anyway. Time to move on. Will you go:

North ► **51**
South ► **537**
West ► **228**
South-east to the Slimeswamp ► **38**
Follow the river north-east ► **504**

360

You have returned to the shop of Perseus – not the hero, but the baker. If you have some **pomegranate honey** and some **farmland grain** and give it to Perseus ► **283**. If not, read on.

Perseus reminds you that in life his honey cakes were famous, but to make them he needs some honey and some grain.

‘Come back when you have some!’ he says amiably, even if it is in an echoing, ghostly voice of the undead. ► **75** and choose again.

361

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 492 immediately. If not, read on.

Cross off the **copper cog**, the **brazen trumpet** and the **lava gem**.

You start work. It is difficult but you have access to Daedalus's tools and the blueprint is very clear and easy to understand, unlike other assembly instructions you may have come across. The lava gem powers the device, and will cause it to glow with a red light. The cog drives its wings, and the trumpet will enable you to record one phrase or message. All you have to do is throw the butterfly up in the air, it will say its recorded line, fly around a bit and glow rather pleasingly. It's basically an amusing toy.

Now it is time to record the phrase that the **bronze butterfly** will say when activated. What will you choose?

'Man is but the dream of the butterfly.'

'Eat my nuts, losers!'

'Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee!'

Note the **bronze butterfly** on your Adventure Sheet, and also which line you decide to record. When you are ready to leave the workshop ► 51

362

Something seems off. She bears a resemblance to someone you've seen before – ah yes, Davora the vampire lamia you killed in the Plains of Howling Darkness. And is that dress made of scales?

With a sudden shriek of 'I've got you now!' the woman changes shape. Where once stood a beautiful young woman now stands a hideous vampire lamia, half snake, half woman. 'I am Mormo,' she hisses, 'and you slew my sister!'

She lunges for you, trying to wrap you in the coils of her snake body whilst biting at your neck, but you are ready for her. You dodge back. You can try to fight her, but she will be a formidable opponent, or you can try to use something you might have. Will you:

Fight ► **428**

Use an item from your pack, if you have any of these:

brazen trumpet ► **166**

child's doll ► **472**

daemon's blood ► **80**

363

You do indeed gain the element of surprise, and you land a hefty blow with your weapon. But it just clangs off harmlessly from her skin of solid gold. It does however, rip a hole in her dress.

‘My blue chiton!’ she booms. ‘How could you?’ And with that, she swings a golden fist at your head. You duck under it fairly easily but it soon becomes apparent that there is nothing you can do to damage her dense golden skin. One clubbing blow from her fist could take you down in an instant, should it connect.

You realise you are now fighting for the chance to escape. Make a STRENGTH or GRACE roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **709**

Fail ► **633**

364

The barge slowly slides upriver, the shade propelling the *Shadow on the Water* with surprising strength for a ghost.

On the riverbank squats a low temple of black rock. Even the pillars at the portico front are of black marble, inlaid with thin silver threads.

‘What is that?’ you ask.

‘The Necromanteion. The oracle of the dead. This is the end of the ride, I can drop you here if you like, or at the bridge a little further upriver.’

Will you:

Debark at the oracle ► **588**

Debark at the bridge ► **821**

365

It is as black as Tantalus' heart. You think you spotted an oil lamp amidst the grave goods and you scrabble about in the dark for it – yes, there it is. You light it up.

In the flickering light, shadows dance across the walls like capering shades at some underworld midnight ball. You look around and are able to find out more about Pelops life from the friezes and wall paintings, and it chills you to the bone.

Tantalus had served in Olympus but he stole ambrosia and other secrets from the gods and was cast out. Bitter and resentful, he murdered his son Pelops, chopped him into bits, boiled him up and served him to the gods for dinner so that they would be defiled by it. But the gods knew it was human flesh, and refused it – all save Demeter who distractedly took a mouthful. Outraged by this foul act, the gods resurrected Pelops and he lived for a time in Olympus. But his shoulder was missing, having been eaten by Demeter so she gave him an artificial one made from ivory. Pelops lived a long and happy(ish) life as King of the Peloponnese (named for him) but his father was punished severely for his foul crimes.

Seems like Tantalus deserved his fate! You search around for an exit or a way to open the door. In the process you find a **royal diadem** and an **ivory shoulder blade**. Note them on your adventure sheet.

However, you haven't found a way to get out of here, and that you must if you are to wreak your vengeance on treacherous Tantalus. Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► 78

Fail ► 441

366

‘Go with our blessing, hero of the age,’ says Atropos, and Lachesis waves her hands over your head airily. Gain one blessing (or none if you have three already).

‘Now, mortal,’ says Clotho, ‘choose your destiny.’

‘It’s not really a choice though, is it?’ says Lachesis.

‘Indeed, we already know what it’s going to be,’ says Atropos.

‘All right, all right, can we just get on with it? I have work to do,’ says Clotho.

What will you do?

Return to the surface ► **8**

Go down into Erebus ► **730**

367

You have the **Helm of the Lost Hero**, if you also have the **Greaves of the Lost Hero**, the **Vambraces of the Lost Hero** and the **Cuirass of the Lost Hero** then you have the complete set. Delete all the Lost Hero items from your Adventure Sheet and add the **Panoply of the Lost Hero** instead. If you have any of the items in storage/vaults make a note that once you have them all in your carried inventory, they will become the panoply.

Where will you go now?

North to the Black Bayou ► **273**

West to the Sacred Way ► **346**

South to the delta ► **493**

North-east ► **51**

South-east ► **537**

368

‘What? Are you mad!’ says Hydna.

‘I need to… visit the king.’

She stares at you, eyes ever so lightly glowing in her pale, ghostly face. ‘Are you sure?’ she whispers.

‘Yes, I must.’

‘So be it.’ She turns to her Mourners. ‘Prepare the catafalque,’ she orders, and starts punting the *Threnody* towards the island of the king of the hydra. The two members of her crew remove the black velvet drape, and replace it with a fresh one. They start stitching a new symbol on it, in silver thread. They are so fast, you soon make out the symbol VV, and under it the words ‘Hero of the Vulcanverse’.

‘What are they doing?’ you ask.

‘Preparing your funeral,’ she replies.

‘What!’ you blurt.

‘No one returns alive from the island of King Polykephales,’ she says.

► **776**

369

If you have the codeword ***New-Artemis*** ► **461** immediately. If not, read on.

As you approach, a door opens in the lodge and out steps a shadowy form. As you draw near, you see that the altar is of ancient oak, clean, well-tended, and covered with black and red flowers. The shade is a woman, dressed in the robes of a priestess.

'Welcome to the shrine of Artemis,' she says in a hollow voice. If you wish to gain her favour, you must first prove you are worthy – gift me a **recurve bow**, and the goddess will give her blessing.'

If you have a **recurve bow** to give her ► **706**

If not, you will have to come back later ► **325**

370

The pavilion is right at the centre of the garden. Benches surround it, where you can take your ease and admire the greenery. Except right now it's a mess of writhing thorns and brambles, regrowing itself.

Inside the pavilion, you find a beaten copper manhole cover, set into the ground with a relief on the lid showing Hades and Persephone sitting on their thrones in the underworld. It looks a little blackened but otherwise seems fine. Try as you might, you cannot open it but around the base, you see these words:

'My first is darkness, a son of chaos
My second is the Styx, the Acheron, and
the Lethe, amongst others
My third are the mountain nymphs
My fourth speaks in riddles
My whole is love
Who am I?'

Take the first letter of your answer, give it its corresponding number in the alphabet, add them all together and turn to that paragraph. If it is correct, it will say so, if not, return here and think again.

If you cannot solve the puzzle, you will have to go back and return here another day.

► **237**

371

‘Out of my way, worm-food!’ you bluster, ‘Can’t you see my heart still beats and that the blood runs hot in my veins? The King himself has summoned me, for he needs me for an important mission into the lands of the living!’

The guard emits a slow hiss. The other puts his spear across as well and says in a gravelly whisper, ‘You lie. You cannot pass.’

You try to double down. ‘Really? And what do you think the King will say when I tell him why I did not answer his call!’ you say, but it falls on deaf ears.

‘Leave or we will drink your blood,’ says the guard. You consider attacking them, but you spot more of them behind, investigating what the fuss is about. It’s not an option. You beat a hasty retreat. You’ll have to try the roof, it’s the only thing left.

► **174**

372

The light that surrounds you gives your position away.

‘It is the hero!’ says Hypnos.

‘You meddling fool, how dare you come here and defile my throne. Destroy this worm and bring their shade to me.’ says Nyx imperiously.

‘Yes, mother,’ says Thanatos.

You cannot fight Thanatos, the god of death, his brother, the god of sleep, and their mother, night itself. You turn and flee as fast as you possibly can. Behind you, Hypnos says, ‘Give yourself up to me, and I will make sure you dream such dreams that you will never wish to wake again.’

‘But only I can bring you peace, cure you of all ills – forever,’ says Thanatos, ‘And this time I will not be denied.’

They give chase...

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 11.

Succeed ► **668**

Fail ► **400**

373

‘I was a Spartan princess, married to a King of Lydia. Agamemnon slew him in battle, murdered our child. To me he said ‘marriage or death’ so I became his wife. Later I bore him a son, Orestes, and a daughter, Iphigenia. To win the favour of the gods in the war with Troy, Agamemnon sacrificed her. My daughter, like she was nothing more than a sheep or a goat because, in the eyes of men, we are mere chattel. But I was avenged, I slew him. And then my son, my own son, took his vengeance in turn, and cut me down, his mother! What are we women but playthings to gods and men, curse them all.’

‘Agamemnon has conquered Elysium,’ you say. ‘Even the shades of the dead will suffer under his cruel rule if he is not driven out. What are his weaknesses, how can I defeat him?’

‘A knife in the back whilst he bathed worked for me,’ she says, the twitch of a smile on her phantasmal face. ‘But that was then, when blood was quick, and hearts were filled with passion and rage. Now, there is only shadow and sadness. Though… perhaps his sceptre, his staff of office. Made by the gods themselves, it gave him power and authority over others. Destroy that and maybe you can destroy him.’

You nod, thank her, and turn to leave. Klytemnestra turns back to bitter contemplation of her fate. You return to the road in the Mourning Fields.

► **786**

374

Desperately, you throw the **abacus** to the floor. It shatters, spilling its beads on the ground. Cross the **abacus** off.

Trapjaw the daemon runs straight into the beads. With a cry of rage, his taloned feet slip on them and fly out from under him. He crashes to the ground in a heap, giving you enough time to flee into the light of the antechamber and away. You run out of the crypts onto the plains of Hades, to lick your wounds and fight another day. Perhaps you can return when you have something that will light up the darkness.

► **193**

375

‘What, you really expect me to fall for that old trick! Perhaps you’re not the great hero you say you are. Perhaps you’ve survived this long through blind luck. We shall see.’ With that she advances upon you. She is a formidable opponent.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 9.

Succeed ► 353

Fail ► 761

376

The last shade warrior fades away like mist on the wind, his broken armour and rusty weapons clattering to the ground. You are victorious. Amidst the remains you find a **shrivelled heart** and a small **statuette of Ares**. You find nothing else of interest in the Mourning Fields and decide to return to the City.

► **10**

377

You drop the three **lava gems** into the crater (cross them off) and offer up a prayer to Thanatos, hoping for a benediction.

Thanatos hears your prayer – gain **Death's favour (one use)**. Note it on your Adventure Sheet. Your next attribute roll is automatically successful. Once it has been used, cross it off.

What will you do now?

Explore the mountainside ► **644**

Leave the volcano ► **410**

378

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **781** immediately. If not, read on.

The *Shadow on the Waters* slowly glides up the Acheron. You round a bend in the river – and out swarms a pack of water rats from their lair on the bank, rushing through the water towards you.

'Those are no ordinary rodents, they are corpse rats!' rasps the bargeman.

As they draw ear you can see what he means – half rotting undead rats, red, feral eyes, teeth like rusty knives, swimming horribly fast. You will have to fight them off.

Make a STRENGTH or a GRACE roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► **611**

Fail ► **523**

379

You have returned to the lair of Wolfshadow, the undead demon-wolf of Hades, whose flayed flesh is invulnerable to mortal weapons and whose howl spells doom to all who hear it without any means to even scratch him. There is only one thing in all the Vulcanverse that can slay Wolfshadow, and you do not have it.

Best leave while you still can ► 228

380

You pour the **golden wine of Dionysus** into dead Midas' mouth. Cross it off your Adventure Sheet. You watch as golden sparkles flow through the mummified corpse up to his hand. You have recharged the Midas touch. Well, once at any rate. To use it again, you will have to come back with another skin of the golden wine.

You can place *one* of these items in the hand of Midas one more time. If you do, add 'golden, +100 pyr' to the end of that item on your Adventure Sheet. That item no longer functions as it once did (for instance, a hardwood club no longer adds 1 to STRENGTH) and cannot be used for anything else either. However, it can be sold at a market for an extra 100 pyr.

laurel wreath
recurve bow
hornbook
hardwood club
fresh fish
statuette of Ares
clockwork owl
komos cup
lobster pot
phoenix feather
arrow of Artemis

If you place the **arrow of Artemis** in Midas's hand, replace it on your Adventure Sheet with the **golden arrow of Artemis**. You cannot (and really should not) sell this.

When you are finished ► **601**

381

□

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **433** immediately. If not, read on.

‘Welcome, adventurer, to the philosophers’ picnic! As you can see, we are still here arguing over, well, everything and anything! But you have returned – have you got something for us?’

‘Hopefully another picnic hamper from Arcadia!’ says Aristippus.

‘No hamper, I’m afraid, although I do bear something even better – a final solution to the paradox of Zeno’s arrow,’ you say.

‘Really?’ says Protagoras.

‘No way!’ says Cleanthes.

‘Hah, I’ll believe it when I see it,’ says Xenophanes.

‘Are you sure you haven’t got another hamper? I’d be forever grateful.’ says Aristippus.

With a flourish, you bring forth the affidavit of Sacrotes and Plota. ‘Here is the sworn oath of two of the greatest philosophers that ever lived – and died – asserting that they have witnessed the arrow in use, and that it does indeed behave as posited!’

‘What, Socrates and Plato? They’ve seen it?’ says Xenophanes.

‘Wow, Socrates and Plato, really?’ says Aristippus. ‘I’ve been trying to get their signatures for decades!’

► **310**

382

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there is a tick in the box already ► 287 immediately. If not, read on.

You have returned to the haunted farmhouse where the ghost of a girl was trapped in the old well, murdered, tragically by her mother. But something is different. The signpost at the entrance that once said ‘Execratos’ now reads ‘Exagorazo’. And the farm no longer seems ruined. In fact, all is at it once might have been on earth in times gone by, yet hazy and indistinct. The sky seems blue and the sun shines down on a bucolic scene but as if through a muslin veil. Chickens run in the front courtyard, chased by a dog. A woman leans out of the farm door, calling for her daughter, who runs, laughing, from the well, a pail of water in her hands. A man, one hand shielding his eyes from the sun, the other holding a bronze bladed scythe on one shoulder, walks over, smiling broadly. The harvest is ready….

It is a scene of what once might have been or even what has been after all? But then it all fades from your sight. Happy laughter is replaced with the faint sound of the wailing dead, carried to your ears by the sepulchral winds of Hades. The farmhouse is now broken and decayed, nothing more than low walls and rubble. A tattered wooden shutter bangs in the breeze.

The well is choked with mud and dust. But what is that by its edge? Something familiar – a beautifully crafted wooden box, with dryads and satyrs exquisitely carved on the lid. Inside you find three **lava gems** and a small bone flute. It too is beautifully carved with dryads. But what kind of bone is it? Your suspicions are heightened when you see it is inscribed with the word ‘Koré’, for that means young girl or maiden in old Greek. This flute couldn’t be carved from the bones of the murdered girl, could it? On the other hand, Koré is also a name for Persephone, the Queen of the Underworld so perhaps it is a gift from her. Yes, best to keep telling yourself that. Note the **bone flute of Koré** on your Adventure Sheet.

There is nothing more for you here, so you return to the Plains of Howling Darkness.

► 412

383

You cannot hope to beat three ancient warrior heroes. They are too skilled. Whilst the swordsman and the spearman keep you engaged, the archer deftly shoots you through the neck. Death is instant. But not permanent for you are favoured by the gods.

► **111**

384

You wield your weapons with such skill that you scare them off without even exchanging a single blow or parry. They turn tail and run for it, like the hopeless cowards they are. As they disappear into the distance, they continue to bicker.

‘Hades, you said, easy marks you said,’

‘All right, all right, my bad, let’s just get out of here.’

‘The living are worse than the dead!’

‘I know, I know….’

Their voices fade away in the chill winds of Hades. Time to move on. Will you go:

North ► **51**

South ► **537**

West ► **228**

South-east to the Slimeswamp ► **38**

Follow the river north-east ► **504**

385

With what you hope is a terrifying war cry, you charge at the hideous spiderling, weapon ready to strike.

‘Hah, I knew it, come to mother, little one!’ she hisses, rearing back. This will not be an easy battle. Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 9.

Succeed ► **353**

Fail ► **761**

386

Tick your Wound box. If you were already wounded ► 81 immediately. If not, read on.

You were too slow, and take a nasty bite to the shoulder, but at least you're still alive. As it rears back, you counterattack. Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► 468
Fail ► 624

387

You find the old kitchens, begrimed with dirt, and stinking of rotten meat. You do find a small jar of honey. Incredibly, it smells and tastes good. Add the **honey of Hades** to your Adventure Sheet. It has healing properties and will restore one wound if you eat it. Don’t forget to cross it off if you do. There is nothing else of interest here. Will you:

Leave the farmhouse ► 412

Explore the rest of the farm ► 215

388

The two shades sitting at the table are not the philosophers Sacrotes and Plota but two ordinary shades of Hades.

‘Where are the philosophers?’ you ask.

‘Gone,’ says one of the shades. ‘They said they were too famous for this inn now that they had won the recognition they deserved, and were off to take their places in Elysium.’

‘Yeah, where only the truly deserving get to go,’ says the other shade, bitterly.

‘Sounded like a pair of mad old duffers to me, can’t see ‘em getting into Elysium,’ says the first shade.

‘More than likely the gods have punished them for their hubris and you’ll find ‘em in Tartarus,’ says the other.

There is nothing for to do here, so you return to the bar.

► **465**

389

‘All right, then, deal,’ you say, ‘but if you betray me this time…’

‘I know, I know, perhaps I was rather hasty before. In my defence, years of torment clouded my judgement. Here you go.’ He hands you the statuette of a small golden dog. Then he gestures at the old wooden shed. ‘All yours,’ he says. ‘I’ll say goodbye then, before you change your mind.’

He runs off and is soon lost to sight. Lose the codeword ***Nefarious*** and gain the codeword ***Nervous.***

Note the **golden dog (3 uses)** on your Adventure Sheet. You can use it up to three times to add +1 to any STRENGTH rolls you make in the future (can be added *after* you have rolled the dice and is in addition to any weapon bonuses). Cross off a charge each time you use it. When you have used up all three charges, keep the dog – you never know, there may be a way to recharge it.

► **257**

390

Rhadamanthus greets you. ‘How goes it with Elysium?’ he asks. Best not to tell him how you have reinforced Agamemnon’s and the titans’ hold on the Blessed Isle so you just mutter something about how you are ‘still on it’. He nods. ‘Well, hurry it up, hurry it up.’ And he waves you away dismissively.

There are three exits here – back the way you came, to the throne room, or to a stairwell heading down. Will you:

Leave ► **10**

Go to the throne room ► **708**

Head to the stairs ► **163**

391

You quickly pocket all the pouches. You get 93 pyr but you have defiled the shrine to a powerful goddess, Aphrodite, and are cursed. Lose all blessings, if you have any, and write **Aphrodite's curse (one use)** on your Adventure Sheet. Deduct 1 from your next attribute roll. Once that is done, delete the curse. When you are ready, you look around. There is nothing left to steal; time to leave. ► **752**

392

You try and open the box, but you can’t find a catch or any way at all to do so. You examine the runes - it is a puzzle of some kind and reads:

‘My first is a many headed monster
My second is an island of the blessed
My third is the mother of the gods
My fourth is the river of woe
And Zeus both loves and fears my whole
Who am I?’

Take the first letter of your answer, give it its corresponding number in the alphabet, add them all together and turn to that paragraph. If it is correct, it will say so, if not, return here and think again. If you cannot solve the puzzle, you have no choice but to leave Elysium and return to the city.

► **10**

393

Your uncle scoops you up and draws his sword, which he holds up to the window. You are spellbound by the play of yellow fire across its dark brown surface.

‘See those chips in the blade?’ says Nicomachus in a tone that is half a laugh, half a snarl. ‘Each a foe who’ll never trouble me again!’

He holds you up to the family as you run your fingers over the bronze sword. ‘See? Our little one is a true follower of the Abundant One, the Leader of Armies, the Blood-Stained Bane of Mortals.’

On your Adventure Sheet, mark Ares as your god and then ► 769

394

The iron doors clang shut behind you. You walk down another short corridor to come to yet another set of great iron doors, this one with the gold face of a sphinx set in the middle of it.

‘Oh no, not another puzzle!’ mutters Deucalion.

‘I can’t believe it, actual adventurers. I didn’t think that would ever happen,’ says the sphinx face of gold with a voice like honey.

‘Come then, what is your conundrum?’ says Deucalion. ‘My foster parent here will solve it in no time.’

‘Foster parent? What is that?’ says the golden sphinx head.

‘It’s a long story and if you don’t get on with things, we’ll tell it to you. In detail,’ you say impatiently.

‘Well, if you want to die so badly, here is my impossible puzzle – lucky in love but unlucky in everything else, Paris of Troy had played three rounds of knuckle-bones in the tavern, each time losing three-quarters of his money. He was left with three pyr. How much has he lost in total?’

You and Deucalion discuss the puzzle. When you think you have the answer, note this paragraph down and turn to the paragraph number that is your answer. If it is correct, it will say so. If not, you have given the wrong answer, in which case come back here and ► **726**

395

Sometimes discretion is the better part of valour. Or, as your bargeman mutters under his breath, ‘A coward dies many times before his death.’

The pirate shades board the *Sea Shadow*. They push you around a bit, but no more than that; they leave you unharmed. They do, however, take all of your money. Cross it off your Adventure Sheet. They do not take any of your equipment though. Indeed, they stash the coins absent-mindedly, as if they had no real use for them, and have only robbed you because that is what they did in life. There is nothing left but to move on.

► **294**

396

You stand before the Gate of Tears, a huge, towering portico of dark granite. Carved into it are myriad faces – mothers, fathers, monsters, demons, dryads, centaurs and so on. All of them are animated by the magic of death, as if they were alive, all of them crying a river of tears. That river spans the entrance to the underworld, like a lake of sorrow. And upon a black barge, seemingly made of shadow, stands Charon, the ferryman, wearing a funeral shroud, his face hooded, a great staff in one hand. He will punt you across the River of Tears if you wish to enter or leave Hades.

'It is forbidden for the living to enter the Houses of the Dead, but the gods sleep and things are not as they should be,' rasps Charon in a voice like bronze. 'You may pass.'

You step into the underworld and into the City of the Dead ► 696

397

‘Hah, hah, hah, brilliant,’ says Aristippus howling with laughter.

‘Hardly the most sophisticated of jokes,’ says Protagoras.

‘Losers, eh? We’re all losers at the end of the day, aren’t we? Just look around. One day, you too will end up somewhere like this!’ says Cleanthes.

‘An amusing device, I suppose,’ says Xenophanes, ‘although the rhetoric is somewhat lacking, to put it mildly.’

‘Entertaining, I’ll give you that, though I advise against showing it to kings, queens, generals, warriors or lawyers,’ says Aspasia.

‘So, are there actually any nuts? To eat?’ says Aristippus.

There is nothing more for you to do here, so you take your leave. ► 144

398

You pull the lever. For a second or two, nothing happens but then there is a sudden burst of light, a wash of nausea, flashing images race pass you, dizzying you, and you find yourself on the plains of Hades. ► 412

399

The bramble beast rears up before you, thrashing at you with its thorned limbs that could shred you like paper. Avoiding them is your first priority. Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **59**

Fail ► **818**

400

You make it into the great cavern where the rivers of Hades are born. You hide amidst the forest of stalactites, hoping to lose them.

But then you hear a sound behind you. You turn, and see Hypnos himself, palely glowing in the shadows. He breathes on you, and you fall into a deep sleep in an instant.

You wake up in find yourself in complete darkness. You reach for an item, but all of your equipment and possessions have been taken from you.

► **832**

401

The *Sea Shadow* slowly floats down the river Styx, the sluggish current doing most of the work. The bargeman punts only occasionally, just to keep the barge on course. The black waters are more reflective than transparent – it looks like the tangled, bramble-like trees that line the banks, mirrored in the water, are reaching up at you from the bottom of the river. It makes you wonder what else might be down there.

You ask the bargeman a question to take your mind off what lies below. ‘What were you before you came here?’

You can see his spectral brow furrowing. ‘What indeed?’ he whispers in a hollow croak, trying to remember. ‘I think… I think… yes, that’s it, a bargeman.’

‘And where did you live?’

‘Live? Did I live?’ he rasps. He falls into silent confusion and the conversation peters out.

You are sailing down the Styx, the river of hate. Roll two dice:

score 2-5: The river goddess! ► **802**

score 6-8: Siren song ► **676**

score 9-12: Flotsam and jetsam ► **551**

402

You soak the **mammoth hide** in the **vinegar of Hades**, creating a **fireproof hide**. Cross of the **mammoth hide** and the **vinegar of Hades** from your Adventure Sheet, and add the **fireproof hide**. You cover as much of yourself as you can with it and make your way to the banks of the river Phlegethon.

Geysers of flame burst up from the river, scattering fiery droplets everywhere like napalm rain. The heat is unbearable. The hide will not protect you forever, but it may give you enough time to rescue the shade of Lampeto.

► **134**

403

Your fingers scrabble in the dust and find an old bone belonging to the original inhabitant of this tomb. You break it in two, and with the sharp bone shard manage to cut through the rope that binds your wrists.

Meanwhile, you see Mormo going through your things. ‘Now, what have we here?’ she mutters, holding up your money pouch. If you had a **child’s doll** then ► 45 immediately. If not, read on.

You creep up behind Mormo and stab her in the neck with the bone shard. She shrieks in pain, but it is not enough to slay such a creature. ‘I knew I should have killed you the first time round,’ she says, whirling to face you ‘but it’s been so long since I feasted on fresh meat.’

You will have to fight her, but it will be hard as you don’t have your equipment so you cannot add any item bonuses. Make a STRENGTH or GRACE roll at difficulty 9.

Succeed ► 331

Fail ► 205

404

Get the codeword ***Newhouse***.

You come to the bridge of Elysium that leads to the main part of the Necropolis. It is clear of barricades and warrior shades of yesteryear. Rhadamanthus the Judge is waiting for you.

'Well done, well done, we cannot thank you enough. Hades will be pleased – as soon as he wakes, that is. Here.' He hands you a scroll, the deeds to a house in Elysium. 'And here.' He gives you 100 pyr. 'Enjoy!'

With that he leaves to return to the palace. You decide to visit your new house ► **100**

405

The volcano of Thanatos, also called the volcano of death, rises up before you. Every now and then it releases a rumbling belch of fetid smoke up into the atmosphere, bringing down a foul stinking sprinkling of blackened powder that falls like rain. Its sides are blackened with ash, and its foothills covered in hardened once-liquid lava, like glue that has set in misshapen mounds and twisted whorls of rock. Heaps of ash and slag are scattered around and about.

You can see shades nearby, rooting through the heaps of ash and slag. What are they looking for? If you have the codeword ***Olifant*** ► **79** immediately. If not, read on.

Will you:

Search through the ashes ► **11**

Climb to the top ► **789**

Explore the mountainside ► **644**

Leave the volcano ► **410**

406

All three heads scream a terrible, ear-splitting scream and slump to the ground in an instant. Dead. You look at the dagger in amazement. You clean off the thick black ichor that was the blood of the hydra and put it away, still astonished by the efficacy of the dagger. Perhaps one day you will battle another king you can use it on. You can now investigate the cave of Polykephales. ► **580**

407

They close with ease, and leap onto your barge. You fight well to start with, but then slip on a puddle of viscous Styx water on the deck, lowering your guard. One of them hits you over the head with the shaft of his spear. You stagger back, stunned, and they overpower and subdue you.

You fear the worst, but, although they push you around a bit, they leave you unharmed. They do, however, take all of your coins. Cross them off your Adventure Sheet. They do not take any of your equipment though. Indeed, they stash the money absent-mindedly, as if they had no real use for it, and have only looted it because that is what they did in life and they know not what else to do. They return to their barge, and sail away. Time to put this behind you and move on.

► 294

408

You heave and strain against one link, using whatever you can as leverage. Prometheus also heaves desperately. And your efforts are rewarded – one of the links bursts apart.

With a great roar of triumph, Prometheus rises up. He staggers for a moment, having been imprisoned and weakened for so long but the very magic that punished him by regenerating his liver every day, also gives him strength. With one great stride forward, he grabs the eagle and rips it apart in a shower of blood and feathers. You step back as he throws the remains to the ground and stamps upon them over and over again, till there is nothing left but a red paste. Hardly a surprise, you think to yourself, given the length of his suffering, but still...

Eventually he comes to his senses and turns to you both.

► **650**

409

You simply turn tail and run for your life. Who in their right mind would fight the actual champion of death himself anyway?

Death Dealer starts in surprise. He wasn't expecting such craven cowardice! He turns to get back on his horse. Perhaps that will give you enough time to make your escape.

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **515**

Fail ► **326**

410

You are standing at the base of the volcano of Thanatos. Smoke billows up from its summit and the bone-pale sky of Hades is lit up in a with a menacing reddish glow. North are some mountains, west open plains, east, the great Gate of Tears, and to the south, a lake of some kind. Where will you go?

East to the Gate of Tears ► **686**
West ► **193**
North ► **60**
South-west ► **412**
South to the lake ► **639**

411

You deftly sidestep the hydra's biting strike. As it rears back, you counter-attack. Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► 468

Fail ► 624

412

You are trudging across the Plains of Howling Darkness. Bone-chilling winds sweep across these desolate plains, carrying the despairing moans of lost souls to every corner of the realm of the dead. Tombs litter the landscape like broken teeth, and shadows walk the land, muttering in the darkness.

It is a lonely fearful place and a slow, creeping doom closes around your heart like a fist of fear.

To the north and west, you can see a sickly, viridian miasma on the horizon, as of steaming swamps. To the north east, a great volcano smokes, a reddish glow from its crown pushes back the nacreous, pallid, maggot-white luminescence of the rest of the skies of Hades, creating a bubble of crimson light. To the east you can see some kind of lake. To the south is the Sacred Way and after that, the edge of the Vulcanverse, beyond which lie the great encircling waters of Oceanus that holds this world in its eternal embrace. Nearby lie tumbled down ruins of some kind and an old, abandoned shrine. Will you go:

North ► **193**
West to the swamp ► **38**
South to the Sacred Way ► **731**
North-east to the volcano ► **405**
East to the lake ► **639**
To the ruins ► **112**
To the abandoned shrine ► **604**

413

You've repaired and reinforced your door since Mormo smashed through it and cut your head off. You eye it warily in case of another attack. Carefully you leave your house, wary in case of ambush, but nothing happens. It seems that Mormo has realised the futility of trying to kill you over and over again. You could beat her after all, despite how it has turned out so far. And the gods will not resurrect her... You move on.

- **10**

414

You leap to the attack, but they react quickly – one shoots at you with his bow, forcing you to duck, whilst the other steps in and whacks you around the head with the end of his spear. You fall senseless to ground.

You wake up to find you have been robbed. Cross off all of your cash and **lava gems**, if you had any. You can see them capering off into the distance, crying ‘We’re rich, we’re rich, the taverns of Arcadia here we come!’

A setback for sure, but perhaps you can recover. Time to move on. Will you go:

North ► **51**
South ► **537**
West ► **228**
South-east to the Slimeswamp ► **38**
Follow the river north-east ► **504**

416

There is nothing more for you to do in the garden – or indeed, much left of it! You make your way out of the front gate, back into the foothills of the City of the Dead.

Nearby, near a fountain and a copse of white poplars, several shades sit as if in discussion. Will you go:

To the gathering of shades ► **770**
East towards Vulcan City ► **325**
West to the Necropolis ► **696**
South towards the Styx ► **330**
North-west to the river ► **821**

417

You have returned to the lair of Davora, the lamia that you slew in battle. The shrine to Typhon is still there, as are her grisly skull trophies.

You see that Davora's body has been laid out in the old tomb, cleansed and purified for burial. There is also a crudely sculpted skull with your name on it and a note beneath it:

'To the one who slew my sister: I swear by Hekate, whose heart is darkness, that I will not rest until I have eaten your heart. Mormo, mistress of serpents'.

If you have the codeword ***Neutralised*** ► **651** immediately. If not, read on.

Hunted by another vampire lamia. Life just gets better and better, eh? But then again, such is the lot of heroes.

You head back out into the unending shadow that is Hades.

► **121**

418

You stand before the Gate of Ivory, one of the entrances into Hades. It is a massive portico of pale, white bone, carved and sculpted with myriad scenes of man, monsters and magic, all writhing and twisting in their places, animated by the power of Hades. Warriors fight ancient battles, heroes slay foul creatures, mothers and fathers lament the loss of their daughters, tragic deeds and epic stories of the gods are played out across the enormous gate. Nearby lies a massive kennel, where the mighty guardian of the gates of Hades, the hell hound Cerberus of the three heads, sits on guard. Save now, as does his master Hades, Cerberus sleeps. You can see his breath, gusting out in a noxious cloud, you can hear his snores as they rattle the kennel door. It is just as well…

You step through the gate and into the underworld at the City of the Dead.

► **696**

419

You haul yourself up and out of the latrine. Once up top, you realise that actually it's a pretty high class toilet. The walls are painted in black and silver, black velvet drapes hang on the walls, and there is a collection of sponges on sticks nearby, presumably for the wiping of certain body parts. You leave the toilet through a door of black marble and step out into a kind of vestibule, similarly appointed with a black and silver colour scheme with sliver wash basins and an attendant. In this case, a ghostly figure, scrubbing the floor nearby. The janitor shade looks up at you in surprise.

'What are you doing here?' he croaks.

'Good question – where is here?' you reply.

'The Palace, of course, the Palace of the Dead, the home of Hades himself. But how… how did you get in here?'

'That's a long story, involving a treacherous father, the lost tomb of a legendary charioteer, giant maggots of death and a toilet, so best told another time,' you say, as you leave through another door… and step into the throne room of Hades and Persephone.

► **101**

420

‘How dare it defile our home like this! Find this mortal, kill it and bring its shade to me!’

‘Yes, mother,’ says Thanatos. You cannot fight Thanatos, the god of death, his brother, the god of sleep and their mother, night itself. You skulk back, trying to remain out of sight behind a nearby pillar. It is time to get out of here.

Thanatos and Hypnos turn, taking a step towards you. Although they can, of course, see in the dark, you can too and there is no obvious light to give your position away. But Thanatos can sense your soul and Hypnos can hear your dreams, even when you are awake.

‘Aha, I know that soul. It is the hero!’ says Thanatos.

‘Meddling fool,’ says Hypnos, ‘give yourself up to me, and I will make sure you dream such dreams that you will never wish to wake again.’

‘Come, mortal, to me. I will bring you peace, cure you of all ills – forever,’ says Thanatos, ‘and this time I will not be denied!’

You turn and run. They give chase, but you have a good head start and are able to lose them amidst the forest of stalactites in the great cavern of rivers. You flee all the way up to the surface.

► 8

421

You grab her by her forearms, and haul her out of the yellow waters that reek of rotten eggs. She lies gasping on the ice. She seems an adventurous sort, dressed in black leathers with a blue cap and tunic and baggy embroidered blue and gold trousers in the Scythian style, but armed only with a long dagger by her side. Her red hair and pale complexion give her a fay aspect.

'Th..th.. thank you,' she manages. You have to carry her to the lakeshore where you quickly get a campfire going and soon she is warming herself by the fire. She says her name is Orphea, a wandering adventurer. You ask what she was doing on the ice, especially as she is also still alive, like you.

'That lake... I... umm.. a family heirloom, it is somewhere in those waters.'

'What, and you swam down into it?'

'No, that's too dangerous, far too cold. I was actually fishing for it, I'd made a hole but it broke apart and I fell in.'

'Fishing for it? You really thought you'd find it with a fishing rod?'

'Well, it had a lodestone on the end, you know magnetic. For finding... metal things. But I've lost that now, fell into the water. I suppose I shall have to try something else.'

'How did you get into Hades anyway?' you ask.

'How did you?' she counters.

'Oh, that's easy. I'm the chosen one of the gods, here to save the Vulcanverse,' you answer glibly.

She stares at you for a few seconds. 'Right,' she says. 'Well, I did it the old fashioned way – I hid under a tarpaulin on Charon's barge. The old fool didn't notice a thing.'

'Hah! Must be a valued heirloom indeed to go to all that effort,' you say. She nods non-committally and changes the subject.

You share some of your rations with her, as you both warm yourselves by the fire. You swap tales of adventure and derring-do. It seems she is more the wandering minstrel type, singing for her supper and the like. Orphea gets out her flute and begins to play a soothing, relaxing tune. You can't help yourself and doze off, dreaming of the finer things in life.

► 139

422

You duck your way into the cage and approach the woman. She doesn't even register your presence, as she rocks back and forth, sobbing. The tears roll down her spectral face and drop to the ground where they evaporate into dust with a hiss. She is a mass of scars.

And then the woman notices the silver buckles on your shoes and she freezes.

'I made those,' she says, plaintively, reaching out with a ghostly hand, her voice a hoarse whisper as if she hadn't said a word in a hundred years. She looks up at you, saying, 'They made me do it, they made me!'

'Who?' you ask.

'The voices, the voices in my head, the Keres...' She drops her gaze back to the silver buckles. 'Oh my little one... ' she mutters.

Who knows how long she has been here, punishing herself.

You try to tell her that her daughter is at peace now and that there is no point in hurting herself for a crime of madness rather than malice and that she has suffered enough.

Make a CHARM roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **642**

Fail ► **806**

423

You have come to the shrine of Ares, an ancient battle site where the dead fight on forever, warrior shade hoplites, black shields versus red shields. The clash of arms and the cries of battle fill the air. You walk between them to the altar, and the battling dead ignore you completely, fighting only to please Ares, the lord of war. You walk up to the shrine.

You can get blessings here. If you are a worshipper of Ares, blessings are free. If not, you must pay 10 pyr per blessing. You can have a total of three blessings at a time. Each blessing can be used to roll again when you fail an attribute check (CHARM, GRACE, INGENUITY or STRENGTH) but only once in any given situation – so if you fail the re-roll, you can't spend another blessing to try again.

When you have finished here ► **117**

424

You play so badly that one of them actually clasps phantasmal hands to his head. The other advances, spear raised, ready to thrust. You're going to have to fight them.

Make a GRACE or a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **376**

Fail ► **292**

425

You hack at it, and neatly lop off its tentacle. The kraken youngling gives a rumbling moan, and drops into the water and away.

‘Let us hope you have not offended Poseidon,’ says the spectral bargeman. Where to now?

Disembark and east ► 51
Disembark and south-west ► 228
Disembark and north-west ► 273
Continue upriver by barge ► 364

426

Blubberjaw is dead, and Lampeto already freed. However, you may be able to find some **lava gems** bobbing in the ‘waters’. Some are even thrown upward by exploding geysers of flame, to land at the river’s edge. Gobbets of flaming napalm also land on the banks... You could try and grab a **lava gem**. If you want to try ► **44**. If not, there is nothing you can do here, it is simply too hot. Where will you go?

North ► **711**

West to the confluence of the Styx and the Phlegethon ► **504**

East ► **193**

South to the swamps ► **38**

427

You pull the lever. You are hurled violently through space and time, to find yourself at the base of a great smoking volcano. The smell of sulphur and death, along with the effects of the journey causes you to throw up uncontrollably – all over the feet of a passing pilgrim shade, planning to make sacrifice to Thanatos. She stares at you with the hollow eyes of the long dead. Then she stares down at her vomit covered feet. Then back up at you. Then down at her feet, dumbstruck.

Someone has just appeared out of thin air, and thrown up over her feet! Perhaps she will think it is some kind of punishment from the gods…. With a shrug, you wipe your mouth and move on.

► **405**

428

You must fight Mormo, the vampire lamia. Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **645**

Fail ► **602**

429

The cave has a rough-hewn tunnel at its far end, leading down into darkness. You light an oil lamp (or another light source, if you have one) and continue on.

A strange odour seeps out of the depths to greet you. It smells of ashes and embers, like a dying hearth fire, mixed with embalming fluid and grave-rot. If despair itself had a scent, this would be it.

Sounds too, echo out of the darkness, faint cries and shrieks, howls as of wolves on the hunt, and every now and then, heavy thudding noises, as if something enormous was stalking the benighted halls and tunnels of Tartarus.

You continue on. The cries and shrieks start to get louder and louder as the tunnel opens onto a pillared portico made out of cold iron. Words have been etched into it. ‘Chamber of the Furies’.

► **603**

430

The heads are readying to strike.

‘Hold on, before you kill me,’ you say.

The hydra pauses. ‘Yes, what is it?’ says one head.

‘We haven’t got all day you know!’ says another.

‘Well you’re a king, right?’ you say.

‘Of course, three kings really,’ says a head. ‘Everyone calls us Polykephales, but each of us have our own names we call each other.’

‘Really? What are they?’ you say, feigning interest.

‘Ena, Dio and Tria,’ says one.

You stifle a laugh. ‘You mean like One, Two and Three!’

‘Yeah, what, you think that’s funny?’ says Ena.

‘No, no, not at all, very practical I suppose. It’s just that... Well, as a King you should wear a crown right? I’ve got one here, the Royal Diadem of King Pelops himself, beloved of Poseidon, you know, he who founded the Peloponnese, who rode the winged chariot, who lived on Olympus with the gods for a while.’

‘Yeah, we’ve heard of him,’ says Dio, eyeing the diadem greedily.

‘Right, well then, we’ll bite your head off and take it,’ says Tria.

‘No need!’ you say. ‘I’ve brought it here as a gift to the great King of the Hydras.

Make a CHARM roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **514**

Fail ► **628**

431

You cut your palm, and squeeze your blood into a bowl. Tick your Wound box. If it was already ticked then gain 1 scar.

You pour your blood onto the dark waters, muttering a prayer to the river goddess and asking for her blessing.

Styx looks down at you. It's hard to tell but you think she is pleased.

'A worthy sacrifice,' she booms.

You bow ingratiatingly. This pleases her further. 'Many things fall to my river bed. Here is one.' She gestures with her hand and something bubbles up out of the water. Roll a die to see what it is.

score 1: **vinegar of Hades**
score 2: **statuette of Ares**
score 3: **hardwood club**
score 4: **hornbook**
score 5: **golden lyre**
score 6: three **lava gems**

Note whatever you get on your Adventure Sheet.

'Farewell, living one,' she says before sinking back down into the black waters. The bargeman heaves a vaporous sigh of relief, and returns to punting you down the river. Will you:

Continue to the delta ► **762**
Debark onto the south bank ► **537**
Debark onto the north bank ► **51**

432

You have returned to the lair of Wolfshadow, the undead demon-wolf of Hades, whose flayed flesh is invulnerable to mortal weapons and whose howl spells doom to all who hear it. Why have you come here? There is only one thing in all the Vulcanverse that can slay Wolfshadow, and you do not have it. Perhaps a visit to a seer or a soothsayer for some advice might help. You have heard there is one to be found in a quarter of the City of the Dead called the Asphodel Meadows. Or there is always the Library of Iskandria in the Desert, that is full of lore. There is nothing else here for you, best leave while you still can ► **228**

433

You have returned to the philosophers' picnic. They are still there, arguing about... well, everything and anything. Whatever anyone says, someone else says the opposite just for the sake of it.

'Welcome back, adventurer, it is good to see you again! Have any of our maxims proven to be useful?' says Aspasia.

'Well now, that depends on the meaning of the word *useful*,' you reply.

'Hah! I see you have indeed learned something from us after all,' chuckles Protagoras.

If you have a **bronze butterfly** ► 478. If not, read on.

Other than to hang out and discuss the meaning of words, there is nothing more for you to do here, so you leave them to their 'picnic'.

► 144

434

The captain of the bridge leans closer to you and looks you up and down. ‘By Ares’s arse, you’ve been in a fight or two!’ he says. ‘I fought for ten years in the Trojan war, and I’ve never seen scars like that, you must be a great warrior indeed!’

You don’t mention that they’re all scars from horrible and painful deaths, rather than victorious duels. Instead you just shrug and say, ‘All in a day’s work.’

‘I’ll let you through – I’m sure Agamemnon could use a warrior like you.’

They open up the barricade and you walk through. Several of the Mycenaean warrior shades clap you on the back as you pass by, impressed by your prowess.

► **479**

435

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 9 immediately. If not, read on.

You approach the workshop. From inside you can hear hammering and scraping sounds, and smoke billows up out of a small chimney.

You announce your presence, and out steps a ghostly shade, wearing a big leather apron and protective head gear.

‘Who are you,’ you ask

‘I am Perdix, the inventor,’ says the shade, in a rasping whisper.

‘Even here, in Hades?’ you say.

‘Absolutely, for I was murdered in life out of envy, and was unable to fulfil my destiny as a great inventor, so I work on, here in Hades. Here, look, I just made this.’ He shows you a small wooden disc with an iron needle that spins, pointing in one direction only. ‘A compass. With that you can tell what is north and thus what is south and so on.’

‘Impressive,’ you say. ‘And who murdered you?’

‘My uncle, can you believe it! Daedalus.’

‘*The* Daedalus,’ you ask, amazed.

‘Yes, the greatest inventor ever, but he wasn’t content with that, oh no, he had to be the *only* great inventor. So he pushed me off the roof, may Athena shrivel his balls!’

‘A tragic tale,’ you say.

‘One day I will be avenged,’ says Perdix. ‘Anyway, what can I do for you?’

► 344

436

You run for your life, Wolfshadow snapping at your heels. Maybe you can dive over the side of the bridge and into the river, and lose the beast in the waters.

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **593**

Fail ► **327**

437

You hand over the art supplies. True to his word, Apelles gives you a painting. Note a **masterpiece by Apelles** on your Adventure Sheet. You can sell it back in Arcadia. Nice! Apelles thanks you, and then rudely dismisses you. ‘Athena speaks to me, I have work to do, begone, simple warrior, great art is being created here!’

You take your leave. Will you head:

North ► **60**
West ► **330**
South-west ► **504**
South to the Phlegethon ► **169**
South-east ► **193**

438

Mark your GRACE score as −1, then ► 459

439

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 87 immediately. If not, read on.

You step further into the crypts. The way is lit with torches on the walls. An archway appears in the dim light. There is a frieze above it, showing the body of a young man undergoing the *prothesis* – the laying out of the dead for preparation before burial. You step through the arch.

If you have a **clockwork owl** ► 303

If not ► 774

440

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 164 immediately. If not, read on.

You set up camp fire to rest and eat some of your rations, here in the relative safety of the Sacred Way. In the distance, you hear the faint sound of a flute playing. You look around, but there is nothing to be seen. The flute grows louder, a melancholy, funereal tune, as of a lonely woman, crying at the grave of a lost loved one.

Suddenly, the temperature drops, and you huddle closer to your fire. The warmth and music lulls your senses, and before you know it, you have fallen into a deep sleep. In your dreams, a voice sounds in your ear, 'It is I, Orphea, now a sad and lonely shade, the one you cruelly abandoned to the icy, sulphurous depths of the Cocytus. Did you think I had forgotten you, arse-spawn?'

You wake with a start. There is a lingering smell of rotten eggs, and you notice cold wet footprints on the Sacred Way.

You also notice that someone or something has been rifling through your possessions. If you have anything musical such as the **bone flute of Koré**, an **ivory flute**, or a **golden lyre** then they have all been stolen. Cross them off your Adventure Sheet. There is nothing more you can do, so from here you can go:

East along the Sacred Way ► 72
West along the Sacred Way ► 306
North-east to the Plains ► 412
North to the Slimeswamp ► 38

441

You heave against the barred door, but to no avail. You search every inch of the walls and floor, but can find nothing. You try digging your way out, but it is no good. Eventually, your oil lamp flickers and goes out. You are stranded, in complete silent darkness. Slowly you begin to die of thirst, alone in the dark, with only a long dead corpse as a companion, and the only sound muttered conversations with yourself as you sink into delirious madness. Death is a sweet release from this awful suffering. But for one such as you, death is not the end.

► **111**

442

Six philosophers had wine and cake, leaving two out of the cake eaters that didn’t have wine. As there were ten wine drinkers, there must twelve philosophers in total.

‘Twelve!’ you say.

‘Correct. Well done, mortal.’ The face grimaces as the great iron doors slowly grind open, splitting the bronze gorgon in two. You and Deucalion step through the doors into a corridor beyond. Behind you, the iron doors close shut with an ominous clang. There is no way back...

► **512**

443

With a confidence perhaps born out of a misplaced bravado, you step out of the shadows and say ‘Hello, spiderling. Do you know who I am?’ The spider creature, taken aback by your introduction, gawps at you for a moment, and it is in that moment that you notice the tapestry that hangs over the altar. It is a highly skilled piece of woven art that depicts all twelve of the Olympian gods reclining on couches, signed by Arachne herself. You have found the Tapestry of Arachne. The spiderling hisses. What is your Glory?

2 or less ► **16**

3 or more ► **462**

444

You are standing in the sacred treasure Vault of Vulcan in Hades, a place on the cusp of life and death, blessed by the God Vulcan himself. Shimmering pillars hold up the ceiling, itself a black shroud filled with glimmering stars. The floor is of black marble inlaid with intricate red mosaics that writhe and glow as if they were made of rivers of lava. Gingerly, you walk upon it, for it feels both unreal, as if you might fall through it at any moment and also dangerously hot, like walking on molten marble. Everywhere there are heaped piles of unimaginable treasures of all kinds. Coins, gems, silver, gold, armour, weapons, vases – inconceivable wealth. Yet it is all insubstantial and unreal. You cannot hold any of it, no matter how you try. Only that which you have left here yourself can you touch.

If you are alive, then you can take any items or money that you have left here previously out of the Vault and add them to your Adventure Sheet or store any items in the vault also – simply cross them off your Adventure Sheet and add them to the box below or vice versa. (Note that you cannot store the **sceptre of Agamemnon**, if you have it. It must remain on your Adventure Sheet).

ITEMS IN VAULT

When you come back to life, you lose all your money and gear from your Adventure Sheet, but you can put any items and money you like into the Vault. However, if you have the **sceptre of Agamemnon** it is not to be crossed off. It stays with you, even after death and will remain on your Adventure Sheet.

If you are alive ► **555**
If you are dead ► **666**

445

You kill one of them, but you take too long dealing with the other and it raises the alarm. A swarm of them come your way, and this time they don’t bother to cocoon you. ► **159**

446

Do you have the **silver seal of Hades**?

If so ► **170**

If not ► **465**

447

You climb down the ladder. As you do, the roar of rushing waters grows louder, and you step down into a wide riverside underground plaza of sorts, well lit with lanterns, set around an altar to Hypnos, the god of sleep. The underground river Lethe rushes past, the river of forgetfulness. You have returned to where the three ghosts of the Argonauts had come, seeking oblivion, and where their wish was granted.

If you have the title **Kraken Friend** ► **508** immediately**.**

If not, there is nothing here for you anymore, so you climb back up the ladder to the Delta of Darkness ► **493**

448

You find Klytemnestra sitting by the filth filled baths, staring up at the grey skies of Hades, a single tear rolling slowly down one cheek. She turns as you approach, and a look of hope crosses her sad face. ‘Greetings, living one. Do you have a draught of waters of the river Lethe?’ she asks.

If you have some **Lethe water** and wish to give her some ► 539

If not, there is nothing for you to do here, so you leave Klytemnestra in her misery, and go ► 786

449

You have returned to the throne room of the titan Nyx and her sons Thanatos and Hypnos.

If you have the codeword ***Restore***, immediately ► **100** in the book *Workshop of the Gods*.

If not ► **486**

450

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **41** immediately. If not, read on.

You clear the ashes away to discover the desiccated corpse of a woman or perhaps a child underneath. Parchment-like skin is stretched over her skull, her sightless sockets seem to stare up at the sky, and long red hair flows down her shrivelled-up body. Her clothing is rotten through but looks like it was a tunic of furs. She wears buckskin boots, unusual for the Greeks, the footwear of a rider perhaps. One arm, however, covered in tattoos, appears to have been preserved by the ink and has fallen to the ground beside her, a slim, pale, perfectly preserved arm of a child or woman, covered from shoulder to wrist in intricate tattoos of interlaced webs and oak leaves.. You pick it up. Note the **tattooed arm** on your Adventure Sheet. There is nothing left of interest.

► **608**

451

After a titanic battle, you manage to defeat the three Argonauts. The shades fade away into nothingness after their second deaths. Finally they have found the oblivion they looked for. One of them leaves behind a bottle of **Lethe water x3**. It has three doses of the waters of forgetfulness. Do not drink it yourself! It may prove useful elsewhere, however.

You decide to investigate where they had set up their campfire. ► 357

452

‘I’ll see what I can do,’ you say.

‘Good, good, now leave me to my work, and may the gods dream a blessing for you,’ says Rhadamanthus.

You look around. There are three exits here – back the way you came, to the throne room or to a stairwell heading down. Will you:

Leave ► **10**

Go to the throne room ► **708**

Head to the stairs ► **163**

453

You are caught between two fat bronze bellies and are painfully crushed. Tick the Wound box on your Adventure Sheet. If you are already wounded, unfortunately it was your head that was crushed between two fat bronze bellies, and you are dead. May the gods smile on your soul. ► **111**

If you are still alive, the statues draw back once more. You cannot tell what set them off, so you'll have to just dive through the next time. If there is a next time…

Ahead, the chamber opens out into a large space. Will you:

Step forward ► **698**

Leave the crypt and come back another day ► **193**

454

You have come to the Gate of Ivory, one of the entrances into the underworld. It is a massive portico of pale, white bone, carved and sculpted with myriad scenes of man, monsters and magic, all writhing and twisting in their places, animated by the power of Hades. Warriors fight ancient battles, heroes slay foul creatures, mothers and fathers lament the loss of their daughters; tragic deeds and epic stories of the gods are played out across the enormous gate. Nearby lies a massive kennel, where the mighty guardian of the gates of Hades, the hell hound Cerberus of the Three Heads, sits on guard. Save now, as does his master Hades, Cerberus sleeps. You can see his breath, gusting out in a noxious cloud, you can hear his snores as they rattle the kennel door. It is just as well.

From here you can go:

North to the mountains of Boreas ► **454** in *The Pillars of the Sky*

North-west to the Sacred Way in the mountains of Boreas ► **300** in *The Pillars of the Sky*

East into Vulcan City ► **509** in *Workshop of the Gods*

South to the River Acheron ► **821**

West into the mountains ► **226**

East ► **713**

455

The garden has been left untended for a long time. There is little rain in Hades, and even that is usually a rain of ashes or the cremated flesh of the dead. It is as dry as tinder here.

The bramble beast rises up, ready to strike you with its thorn-encrusted limbs. Desperately you fumble with flint and tinder. Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **206**

Fail ► **285**

456

The man who pretended to be Charon is long gone. You wonder whether he will suffer the wrath of Hades for his blasphemy. Anyway, there are no tolls to pay, the passage is clear. Will you go:

North ► **51**
South ► **537**
West ► **228**
South-east to the Slimeswamp ► **38**
Follow the river north-east ► **504**

457

Gain the codeword ***Nettle***.

‘Karya the dryad sent me,’ you say. ‘From Arcadia. She misses you terribly. I’m to help you out of Hades back to the real world, so you can be reunited. She loves you that much!’

‘Love? You call that love?’ says Davides bitterly. ‘I didn’t choose to be her lover, oh no!’

‘What do you mean?’ you ask.

‘She enchanted me! Used some kind of spell or potion to make me love her. I was suffocating in that so-called love, forced against my will to be her doting toy, her loyal pet, her little tree frog. And I had to do her hair and nails whenever she wanted! She calls it love – I call it slavery.’

‘Oh… I see… but how did you…’

‘Don’t you see? There was only one way out, only one way to break the spell – death. So I killed myself.’

‘Wow…’

‘And so here I am, and here I’ll stay; there is no way I’m going back to her. Better this… this never-ending grey, these pallid blooms, the endless meadows, than doting slavery at her feet! Go back and tell her that, tell her to her smug, self-satisfied face. She’ll never have me again. I hate her more than life itself. Literally.’

‘Well, that seems pretty clear. So be it.’ you say.

‘Anyway,’ says Davides. ‘Fancy a haircut and a manicure? I’ll do it for nothing, just to keep my eye in, and so you don’t feel you’ve wasted a trip.’

Say yes and take a seat ► **682**

Say no, and leave ► **75**

458

You have come to what some call the suburbs of the Necropolis. These suburbs are in fact a huge, sprawling cemetery. A constant wind seems to blow here, bringing with it the faint sound of sobbing and wails of mourning, and a funereal scent, as of embalming fluids and grave dirt. The sky is darkly grey here like an old bruise, and it seems to hunker down over everything as if it were trying to keep something battened down.

Grave-cold tendrils of mist rise up out of the ground, twirling around your ankles and chilling you to the bone.

Everywhere there are gravestones, tombs, mausoleums and sepulchres. Lost shades wander the doom-laden landscape, endlessly searching for something they know not what, and thus can never find.

One mausoleum stands out from the rest, a tall monument of alabaster, carved with geometric patterns under a classical portico.

Nearby, you also see a strange looking house of some kind with many statues in the garden. Will you:

Investigate the mausoleum ► **4**

Investigate the statues ► **510**

Leave the area ► **76**

459

There is no fire in the hearth, only ash. Outside is the cold blue of a winter's evening. The house feels as if something vital has gone out of it.

Years have passed. You are fully grown. Beside you, your mother is no longer the robust force of nature you remember but a thin little old lady.

'Two coins,' she says, holding them up. 'It's all we have to buy supper.'

It's only now you become aware of your brothers and sisters, all younger than you, huddled in silence at the back of the room.

'Give them to me, mother, and I'll fetch us something.'

'But then, how will he pay the ferryman?'

And it's with dread that you follow her eyes to the table, where the sheeted body of your father lies. Those two coins, placed on his eyes, would give his spirit the means to cross the river into the afterlife.

'Or should they go as an offering to the gods, who must look on us kindly if we are to survive?' wonders your mother. She sounds so lost and bewildered that you must surely stir and sob in your slumber.

Use the coins to buy food ► **96**
Put them on the body's eyes ► **146**
Take them to the shrine ► **214**
Keep them yourself ► **279**

460

You have come to the far north of Hades, up against the great wall that surrounds Vulcan City where a locked iron hatch has been set into the ground. You unlock it with your key, revealing a tunnel beneath. Lampeto and her companions look overjoyed – as far as three people who have been dead for longer than you've been alive could be said to be overjoyed, that is.

'Thank you, my saviour,' says Lampeto, resting a ghostly hand on your shoulder. 'As I am – or at least once was – a Queen of the Amazons, I dub you my champion!'

Note the title **Queen's Champion** on your Adventure Sheet.

The tunnel is roughly hewn out of the dirt, with a simple tamped down earthen floor. It is very short, running only under the walls to the other side, where there is another locked iron hatch. Your **iron key** also unlocks this.

Lampeto says here farewells.

'Come and find me in Boreas. There is more work we can do together. The more you aid me, the greater will your reward be, trust me!'

With that, the three shades disappear into the city and are gone. You can go:

Back to Hades ► **713**

Into Vulcan City ► **350** in *The Workshop of the Gods*

461

‘Welcome back, pilgrim,’ says the priestess in a ghostly voice.

‘What is your name?’ you ask.

The priestess stares at you with dark, spectral eyes. After a while she says, ‘I forget. Chloe maybe? Or perhaps Chloris… Ah well. A priestess in life was I, and also in death for I could never forsake my Artemis.’

You bow to her piety. You can get blessings here. If you are a worshipper of Artemis, blessings are free. If not, you must pay 10 pyr per blessing. You can have a total of three blessings at a time. Each blessing can be used to roll again when you fail an attribute check (CHARM, GRACE, INGENUITY or STRENGTH) but only once in any given situation – so if you fail the re-roll, you can’t spend another blessing to try again.

When you have finished here ► **325**

462

‘Yes, I know who you are – that mortal hero, making a nuisance of themselves all over the place,’ hisses the creature in a voice like iron filings scraped down a blackboard with a wire brush, ‘Impressive, I grant you, but all the more reason why you should be put down. And you should know who *I* am – Syna the spiderling, high priestess of this temple, and daughter to Arachne herself!’ She raises up her blade-tipped forearms, ready to strike.

Perhaps just stepping out like that wasn’t the best plan. Desperately, you say, ‘What’s that!’ and point behind her...

Make a CHARM roll at difficulty 7

Succeed ► **245**

Fail ► **375**

463

All I wanted was your love, mother!’ wails the apparition, as she flails at you with her dagger. Shadowy strands of night crowd around you, clouding your vision. You have no choice but to fight back.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► **83**

Fail ► **115**

464

All you can hear is loud singing, and that out of tune and cacophonous. But through it all, you can make out the occasional sentence or two.

‘The spider does not need to know the name of the fly.’

‘If the king of the hydras covets a crown, which uneasy head shall wear that crown?’

‘Even the winged flesh eaters will stop to listen to Apollo’s silver tongue.’

‘Feed it fish. Always feed it fish.’

Almost entirely meaningless, but what else do you expect from an oracle? When you are ready, you can try again or head off.

Leave an offering of 10 pyr ► **740**

Leave the area ► **610**

465

If you have the codeword ***Noodles*** ► 748 immediately. If not, read on.

If you have the codeword ***Nirvana*** ► 352 immediately. If not, read on.

Helen has granted you free use of the Inn of the White Poplars. You can stay here, rest and heal up. Untick your Wound box, if you are wounded. You look around. In one corner, the shade of a bard, playing a lyre, is singing a song. In another, two ghostly forms are in deep discussion. At the bar, Anchises drinks and Helen works.

You can buy and sell a few things here at the following prices:

	To buy	*To sell*
strix stew	20 pyr	15 pyr
pomegranate wine	–	35 pyr
vinegar of Hades	20 pyr	15 pyr
honey cake	–	50 pyr

When you are done, you can:

Listen to the bard ► 160
Talk to Helen ► 574
Talk to Anchises ► 680
Talk to the shades in the corner ► 475
Leave and head north ► 346
Leave and head to the delta ► 493

466

You shrug helplessly. ‘I don’t think there is anything I can do,’ you say. ‘Short of slaying you in battle.’

‘Hah, good luck with that. I don’t want to have to clean another set of brains off the wall, so you’d best leave whilst you still can.’ Zoë indicates the passage-way with a nod of her golden chin. Will you:

Attack ► **296**

Leave the area ► **76**

467

You have no choice but to fight the lamia. It’s not going to be easy – she’s fast, filthy and ferocious.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► 595

Fail ► 722

468

As the king of the hydras pulls back for another strike, you neatly lop off one of its heads with a scything stoke of your weapon! The other two heads scream in rage. One down, two to go, but one of them is aiming to bite off your head. You'll have to dodge once more. Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **672**
Fail ► **304**

469

He leads you into the cave mouth, and then points to a carved, white-marbled portico at the end of the cave. ‘That, my friend, is the door to the tomb of my son, Pelops, who in life was King of Peloponnesus and founder of the Olympian games, the greatest charioteer of his time. Inside you will find the golden dog. Enter, and help yourself, with my blessing.’

Enter the tomb ► **107**

Tell him to get it for you ► **140**

470

The **iron key** unlocks the hatch. You lift it up to reveal a tunnel that seems to head under the walls and into Vulcan City. Will you:

Go to the mountain Gate ► **454**
Follow the wall south ► **325**
Enter the tunnel ► **350**

471

The ash and rock has been searched exhaustively by you and many others. There is nothing left to find. Will you:

Climb to the top ► **789**

Explore the mountainside ► **644**

Leave the volcano ► **410**

472

You toss the **child's doll** at the feet of Mormo. She pulls up short, and reaches down to pick it up, uttering a strangled sob.

'Oh my children, my dear children,' she says, starting to weep, 'they made me, they made me do it, I'm so sorry my little ones…' She starts to sob uncontrollably. She has forgotten you for the moment. You have the advantage. Will you:

Strike her down ► **547**

Console her ► **738**

473

You are able to dart back in time as the edge of the fishing hole crumbles into the waters. Just as well, judging by what happened to Orphea who you rescued from that hole. It nearly killed her.

‘Should have left her to drown,’ you mutter bitterly under your breath as you gather your gear and head out.

► **586**

474

If you have the codeword ***Naughty*** ► **819** immediately. If not, read on.

You are travelling on the Sacred Way in the north-west of the underworld. A cold wind blows off the ocean to the west. It is actually quite refreshing as the winds of Hades are usually redolent with death, decay and despair. To the north, the way ends. You cannot get into the mountains of Boreas from here for the Veil of the Shadow of Death that surrounds the underworld prevents all travel into and out of Hades, save through its two great gates. However, there is also a range of northern mountains that are within the realm of the dead.

Nearby, you see a tumulus of some kind, an ancient burial mound, a not unexpected sight here in Hades, but this one seems especially old. From here, you can go:

North to the mountains ► **226**
South along the road ► **346**
North-east, inland ► **12**
South-east, inland ► **117**
To the burial mound ► **550**

475

□

Put a tick in a box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 102 immediately; otherwise read on.

You approach the two figures sitting around a table in the corner. They seemed to be engaged in a heated conversation.

‘No, no, he’s the charlatan,’ says one of them.

‘I know, but it’s not just him, it’s both of them, the swines!’

Both shades are dressed in the himation, a voluminous robe similar to the Roman toga. One is bald and bearded, the other quite well-muscled for an old man. Although they are both ghosts, they seem quite lively. Curiosity piqued, you introduce yourself. They look up in surprise.

‘By Coeus’ cock, you’re alive!’ says one.

‘Now, now, Sacrotes, there’s no need for rudeness!’ says the other.

‘Bah, by Athena’s wise-arse, don’t tell me what I can and cannot say, Plota! You’re always putting words in my mouth.’

‘No need for blasphemy either!’ says Plota.

‘What do you guys do anyway – or did, rather?’ you ask, trying to defuse the situation.

‘We’re philosophers,’ says one. You sigh resignedly.

‘Yes,’ says the other. He looks up at you hopefully. ‘Sacrotes and Plota. You may have heard of us?’

► 534

476

Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **705**

Fail ► **612**

477

You pull the lever. There is a moment of sickness and dizzying momentum, and suddenly you find yourself where the rivers Styx and Acheron flow out to the great encircling sea of Oceanus. ► **493**

478

□

Put a tick in a box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **68** immediately; otherwise read on.

'I would like to show you all this, too,' you say, and you throw the **bronze butterfly** into the air. Immediately it flutters upward, brightly coloured and beautiful. It looks for all the world like a large, exotic butterfly; you cannot tell it is a mechanical device, not without examining it closely. The butterfly speaks – but what does it say?

'Man is but the dream of the butterfly.' ► **216**

'Eat my nuts, losers!' ► **397**

'Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee!' ► **118**

479

Elysium, the Elysian Fields, the Blessed Isle as it is also known, is a rather beautiful place. There is a sun in the sky, although how and what it is, is another question. Divine magic perhaps but you can feel its comforting warmth on you face, something you have sorely missed here in the underworld. The fields are green, there are trees and flowers (albeit black or red flowers but still). There are bucolic villas and palaces, streets are cobbled and clean, plazas have statues and pillared temples. Bandstands are dotted around, along with open air theatres. It's like the centre of a mighty city on earth, where the elite live and the triumphal arches, civic monuments and memorials are to be found. Or rather a pale shadow of that for everything is washed out and somehow insubstantial, for it may be a kind of heaven but it is a heaven of the dead.

And now it is under a kind of martial lock down. Ancient warrior shades, armed and armoured as Mycenaean soldiers of old from the Trojan wars patrol the streets and fields; the ordinary shades of Elysium remain indoors or hurry along the streets, doing the bidding of their new masters. They cower under the boot heels of Agamemnon, King of Elysium. These ancient warrior shades are not like the usual ghostly shades you find in Hades. They have a kind dark vigour about them, like night predators back on earth. You will have to avoid them wherever possible.

► 744

480

You drop the **lava gem** into the crater (cross it off) and offer up a prayer to Thanatos, hoping for a benediction.

Thanatos hears your prayer – gain a **benison (one use; +1 any attribute)**. Note it on your adventure sheet. It gives you +1 on your next attribute roll. Once it has been used, cross it off.

What will you do now?

Explore the mountainside ► **644**

Leave the volcano ► **410**

481

If you have some **lamia venom** and want to use it ► 655. If not, read on.

Whilst Trapjaw is momentarily blinded you take the chance to strike down at one of his feet, breaking bones. The daemon howls in pain, but, narrowing his eyes against the light, he still grabs at you, trying to draw you into the enormous bone-jaws of his chest. You must fight Trapjaw. At least he is limping badly, giving you an advantage, but still he is a mighty opponent.

Make a STRENGTH or a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► 592

Fail ► 799

482

The first shade leaps across, and you hammer him aside, so that he plunges into the river instead, and is lost. The other makes it over, but you fight well, disarm him, neatly hack off a leg, and as he collapses onto the deck you kick him into the river, where he too sinks without a trace.

‘Heroic,’ says the bargeman laconically. You wonder if he was perhaps a Spartan in life. ‘To the victor, the spoils,’ he says. ‘Take what you like from their barge.’

► **191**

483

They bicker on. But then Tria says, ‘Wait, what if all agreed to share the diadem?’

You’d better act now, time is running out. The **kingslayer dagger** was used by Klytemnestra to kill King Agamemnon in his bath and since that murderous act, is said to have gained the power to kill any King. But does that include a king of monsters? You are about to find out. You plunge the dagger in the spot where the three heads join the main body.

► **406**

484

□

Put a tick in a box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 323 immediately; otherwise read on.

The *Shadow on the Waters* slowly scuds northward. The waters of the Acheron are blue tinted and the surface glitters like moonshine. It is pleasing to look upon.

‘Do you have a name?’ you ask the bargeman.

‘I do, but for the life of me, or rather the death of me, I cannot remember it, nor can any of my customers, nor even my cousin, the bargeman of the Styx.’

‘Your cousin is Charon?’ you ask.

‘No, no, may the gods forgive me, no, my cousin is just a shade like me, punting people up and down the river for a few coins.’

Suddenly there is a banging sound, as of something hitting the hull. A tentacle curls around the prow.

‘Aieee, the kraken!’ cries the bargeman. You run forward, ready to cut the tentacle away.

► 77

485

Lose the codeword ***Neophyte*** and gain the codeword ***Nephew***.

You awaken to find that the **Eye of Typhon** has melded into your right eye. You can still see perfectly well but now you can also shoot pulses of fiery energy from it, like a lance of flame.

Note on your Adventure Sheet that you have the **Eye of Typhon (3 uses)**. You can use it three times only to automatically reverse any STRENGTH or INGENUITY test that you have failed and turn it into a success. Once you have used up all three charges, the **Eye of Typhon** will fall out, leaving your old eye intact and unharmed.

Feeling empowered, you head back up the ladder and out into the unending gloom that is Hades.

► **121**

486

There is no one on the throne or nearby. It appears deserted.

But then you hear a sound behind you. You turn, and see Hypnos himself, palely glowing in the shadows. He breathes on you, and you fall into a deep sleep in an instant.

You wake up in find yourself in complete darkness. You reach for an item, but all of your equipment and possessions have been taken from you.

► **832**

487

You step forward and hew mightily at the back of the spiderling's head, but at the last minute she senses your attack, and twists away. 'Hah, I knew it!' she shrieks as you stumble forward. She deftly grabs you in her arms and sinks her spider fangs into your shoulder, injecting her venom. You break away, but then her poison begins to course through your blood. You feel a dark, insidious pleasure, like nothing you've felt before, suffusing your entire being. Euphoric joy, a kind of sin-filled delight fills your brain. The spiderling smiles an evil smile. Soon, your will is entirely hers. You are utterly addicted, and will do anything for what she calls 'Arachne's Kiss' and you become her slave, her minion, forced to do her bidding forever. Not even the gods can save you now, for you have not died. ► **750**.

488

It’s probably not worth risking the wrath of the gods, so you decide to leave. ‘Wait, no, come back! Gold, I will give you gold,’ says Tantalus. You ignore him.

‘You coward! You lick-spittle slave to the gods, you dung-smeared maggot, you anal polyp, you insect!’ His insults fade into the distance. Will you:

Investigate the statue ► **733**

Go back downriver ► **330**

489

You sort through the grave goods heaped up against the sarcophagus. Much of it turns out to be a long rotted funeral banquet that must have been truly sumptuous. You find amidst it all a **book of recipes**. Note it on your Adventure Sheet. You also find a **box of paints** and an **abacus**. Not bad, but a bit disappointing given that it is the tomb of King Midas. If only you could take the sarcophagus itself, as it is solid gold. You step up its side to look at the lid of the sarcophagus – and discover that it is open topped. You look down on the mummified corpse of Midas. His crown is a long decayed laurel wreath, and his clothes tattered robes of silk, with nothing else around him. He lies with one forearm held up, the hand open wide, as if waiting for something to be put into his hand. Is it possible that his power to turn things to gold – the Midas touch – still works, even after death?

You experiment with an old twig, placing it in the open hand. Incredibly, it works, the twig does indeed turn into solid gold.

► **601**

490

You throw some rocks at the spider webs on the other side of the temple. Alerted by the vibrations the spiders scuttle away to investigate, leaving you free to enter the temple unnoticed. ► **540**

491

You manage to hit your targets, creating a couple of lines across, one to hold onto, another to walk on.

Unfortunately, one of your arrows comes out of its mark, and you plunge into the endless dark falling and falling for ever and ever. Eventually you die of thirst, but not without seeing the most amazing things – comets, stars, planets, asteroids and all the astonishing wonders of the heavens. Even though you have died out here in the vastness of space, death is not the end for you are still in the Vulcanverse.

► **111**

492

You have returned to the workshop of Daedalus but there is nothing else for you to do here so you move on ► **51**

493

The Delta of Darkness is at the confluence of two rivers, the Acheron, river of woe, and the Styx, river of hate. Here their waters merge into a brackish, black sludge that slowly oozes out to Oceanus, the great wide waters that encircle the Vulcanverse. The inky-black waters of the two rivers crawl around a number of islets in the delta. The waters exude clouds of mosquito-like insects filling the air with an unpleasant buzzing. The stench is almost unbearable, as of a Spartan army latrine, after several weeks of eating only their infamous ‘black soup’ made from pigs’ legs, blood and vinegar. As you draw near, you notice a half sunk trireme, nearly submerged in dark sludge, and what looks like an altar on a nearby islet. And is that a small stone hut on another islet? Will you go to:

The small hut ► 779
The sunken boat ► 39
The altar ► 178
The river Acheron ► 3
North by land ► 228
East, over land ► 537
East on the Sacred Way ► 306
West ► 579

494

You will have to fight the three Argonauts. They are experienced warriors too, it won't be easy.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 9.

Succeed ► **451**

Fail ► **383**

495

It wasn’t how you planned to spend your afternoon, but you play some games with the children. They’re delighted to have the attention of somebody a bit older.

Write your attributes on the Adventure Sheet:

STRENGTH 0
GRACE 0
CHARM +1
INGENUITY 0

Then ► **679**

496

If you have the codeword ***Neverending*** ► **133** immediately. If not, read on.

A blood-curdling howl fills the air. You pull up short, listening expectantly. But nothing comes of it. After all, screaming, howling and roaring is oft to be heard in the gloomy bowels of the underworld. You shrug your shoulders and move on:

North ► **51**
South ► **537**
West ► **228**
South-east to the Slimeswamp ► **38**
Follow the river North-east ► **504**

497

You climb into the chariot, hitch up the bronze bulls and, using the reins, command the bulls to pull the chariot out of the stable shed. The chariots' wings spread wide, the bulls, snorting fire and steam, begin a hammering gallop and then the chariot soars skyward. You sweep over Hades below. Note that the chariot will drop you off, and then return here, so you will have to come back if you want to use it again. Where will you instruct the bulls to take you?

The deserts of Notus ► **222** in *The Hammer of the Sun*

The mountains of Boreas ► **222** in *The Pillars of the Sky*

The gardens of Arcadia ► **222** in *The Wild Woods*

498

□

Put a tick in a box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 532 immediately. If not, read on.

In the distance, you hear an eerie sound, a flute playing a melancholy, funereal tune, as of a lonely woman crying at the grave of a lost loved one... The temperature suddenly drops and the air is filled with the smell of rotten eggs. Yellow stained footprints appear on the road beside, but you can see no one! A disembodied voice whispers in your ear, 'It is I, poor water-logged Orphea, who you abandoned and left to drown in the yellow, stinking waters of the Cocytus, you dung-faced shit-clown!' With that, you are suddenly shoved to the ground.

You leap to your feet, weapon drawn, but all is silent. Wet footprints lead away for a short distance and then fade into nothing.

It is not until later that you realise you have been robbed. Lose *all* of your pyr, every last coin. Aghast at such a loss, you can do nothing but move on. You can go:

North to the Gate of Tears ► 686
West to the lake ► 639
Follow the road south-west ► 731

499

If you have the codeword ***Neural*** ► **812** immediately. If not, read on.

The building is made of bricks and mortar with a simple portico and a frieze depicting a man at a workbench working on some kind of machine. You enter and surprisingly, as soon as you walk in, lanterns light up on the walls, as if by magic.

The chamber is rectangular, the walls lined with granite. Everywhere lie bits of bronze, iron and wood in various shapes and sizes. Cogs, tubes, tools, curious broken contraptions, clockwork devices of unknown purpose, screws, nails, wires and so on lie scattered about. Another bench is littered with the apparatus of alchemy – alembics, beakers, vials of chemicals and so on. You suspect the lights are not magical at all, but a clever device of some kind.

In one corner is a furnace, in the other some kind of brewing vat. You rummage around – everything is largely rusted, broken or of little use to you.

You also find a big bronze chest with a combination lock on it. Nearby is a book. It is full of complex drawings and indecipherable notes written in some kind of shorthand. However, there is a name that you can read on the inside cover.

It says: 'This book belongs to Daedalus, architect, inventor, artist, and father of a lost son.' A rather sad entry it seems. Underneath that entry you see these three questions:

'The palace of Hades took seven years to build. Each year the spirits of the dead workmen were able to double its height. How many years did it take for the palace to reach half of its maximum height?'

'How much does an amphora of wine weigh if it weighs one pound plus half its own weight?'

'There are two head of sheep in a paddock. The shepherd enters the paddock and leaves with two heads. How many are left in the paddock?'

Solving those puzzles will give you three digits that will open the combination lock of the big bronze chest. When you think you have an answer, write **499** in the Current Location box and turn to the number. If it is correct, it will say so. If it is not, come back here and try again.

If you cannot solve the puzzle and want to come back and try again later

- **51**

500

There is a flash of light, and you find yourself back at an entrance to the underworld of Hades. Roll a die.

score 1-3: The Gate of Ivory ► **454**

score 4-6: The Gate of Tears ► **686**

501

After a titanic battle, you and Deucalion manage to slay the huge eagle. Together, you unlock Prometheus from his bonds of bronze. He is free at last... ► **650**

502

You have come to a shrine of Athena. Atop a carved marble pedestal rests the mechanical owl you placed there. It whirrs and chirrups as you approach.

You can get blessings here. If you are a worshipper of Athena blessings are free. If not, you must pay 10 pyr per blessing. You can have a total of three blessings at a time. Each blessing can be used to roll again when you fail an attribute check (CHARM, GRACE, INGENUITY or STRENGTH) but only once in any given situation – so if you fail the re-roll, you can't spend another blessing to try again.

When you have finished here ► **412**

503

You start singing what you think is a beautiful song – surely it would soothe any savage beast? But no, the strixes don't appreciate your song, it appears to enrage them. Although cowards in attack, it is another thing entirely to defend your nest, so the strixes swoop down, and although you kill a few more they do not give up this time. They swarm over you, and you are savagely pecked and sliced.

Tick the Wound box on your Adventure Sheet. If you were already wounded, then death is swift, for they slice you up, drink your blood and eat your eyeballs. ► **111**; if not, read on.

You beat a hasty retreat, and the strixes, having lost a few more of their number, let you go ► **564**

504

You have come to the intersection of the Styx and the Phlegethon, the river of fire. To the east, clouds of smoke and steam obscure the river. Through intermittent gaps in the smoke you spot leaping flames.

Will you go:

North along the Styx ► 330
South to the Slimeswamp ► 38
West ► 51
South-west along the Styx ► 145
North-east to the land between the Phlegethon and Styx ► 711
Follow the Phlegethon east ► 169

505

You are in the Asphodel Meadows. Where will you visit?

House of Tiresias the Seer ► **198**

A nearby stall ► **570**

A small workshop ► **435**

A barber shop ► **108**

Leave the meadows ► **10**

506

Wolfshadow is approaching fast. You might just be able to fool him by hiding in one of the mounds of ash. The ash may throw him off the scent.

Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **319**

Fail ► **327**

507

You run as fast as you can, but the light is poor and the chamber strewn with rocks. You lose your footing and fall, the lamp falls from your hand, and you are plunged into darkness. You scream in horror as you feel the maggots beginning to swarm all over you, a writhing mass of mouths, eager to feed. You are overwhelmed and devoured in seconds, in darkness, alone. At least death is quick. And for you, it is not the end.

► 111

508

A kraken roils up from the depths, a writhing mass of tentacles. It stares at you with its squid eyes and actually chirrups a greeting. You have a sigh of relief – it is your kraken, the one you fed as a baby, the one that helped you previously. It extends a massive tentacle, and lightly touches your face. Although it smells of river mud and dead fish, you pat it its tentacle in return. Friendship is a strange thing…

If you have some **fresh fish** and want to give it to the kraken ► **556**. If not, read on.

You hang out together for a while before the kraken disappears ‘neath the waves of the Lethe. You leave the cave of forgetfulness back to the delta, musing on the dynamics of inter-species relationships. ► **493**

509

☐

Put a tick in a box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **780** immediately; otherwise read on.

The **sceptre of Agamemnon** stirs once more. Thin wispy tendrils of purest night, flecked with tiny stars, writhe and crawl into your chest, slowly closing around your heart. A sibilant whisper sounds in your head.

‘I am Nyx, born of Chaos, mother of the Keres, of Nemesis, Thanatos, Hypnos and Charon. My brother is Erebus. And soon you will be a child of the night.’ She sighs, and it feels like a warm, midnight breeze, scented with cinnamon and jasmine.

Now turn to the paragraph number written in your Current Location box.

510

You approach a house of the dead atop a hill. The slopes of the hill are well tended as rather fetching terraced gardens. As you draw near you see that the gardens are littered with statues of uncanny verisimilitude. There appear to be several well-armed heroes, as well as more ordinary folk. You are marvelling at the workmanship when you realise most have expressions of utter terror on their faces or are caught in fluid poses. The sculptor must have been a god, surely.

But then it dawns on you – these are people who have been turned to stone... Will you:

Enter the house ► **660**

Leave this place ► **458**

511

You are travelling on the Sacred Way in the north-west of the underworld. A cold wind blows off the ocean to the west. It is actually quite refreshing as the winds of Hades are usually redolent with death, decay and despair. To the north, the way ends. You cannot get into the mountains of Boreas from here for the Veil of the Shadow of Death that surrounds the underworld prevents all travel into and out of Hades, save through its two great gates. However, there is also a range of northern mountains that are within the realm of the dead.

Nearby, you see a tumulus of some kind, an ancient burial mound, a not unexpected sight here in Hades, but this one seems especially old. From here, you can go:

- North to the mountains ► 226
- South along the Sacred Way ► 346
- North-east, inland ► 12
- South-east, inland ► 117
- To the burial mound ► 550

512

You and Deucalion find yourselves in a short corridor ending in another set of massive metal doors. This one has a the face of minotaur, cast out of silver, upon it. As you draw near, the eyes flick open.

‘Oho, what have we here?’ says the silver minotaur in a deep, heavy voice, ‘adventurers making another pitiful attempt to free Prometheus!’

‘Another attempt? Have there been others?’ you say.

‘Umm... actually no, but anyway. I see you got past the gorgon then. Doesn’t surprise me, she’s as stupid as, well, a bronze head.’

‘Does that make you as stupid as a silver head then,’ says Deucalion.

‘Now now, no need to get personal,’ says the minotaur head, ‘but there is a difference you know. I’m precious metal, for a start!’

‘Anyway, have you got a puzzle for us too?’ you ask.

‘Oh yes, indeed. See if you can solve this, stupid mortals!’ The silver minotaur clears its throat and then says portentously, ‘A street has a hundred houses, numbered 1 to 100. How many houses have the number 9 in their address?’

What is your answer?

Ten ► **630**

Eighteen ► **552**

Nineteen ► **313**

513

Gain the codeword ***Nefarious***

You wade into the pool, grab Tantalus – he is as light as a feather – and drag him out. He collapses at the side of the pool. You have gone against the will of the gods and they are angry – lose all blessings you may have (you can get blessings again later at a shrine, it is not a permanent curse). Although you have suffered, Tantalus is overjoyed.

'By Zeus' black, vengeful heart, I can't believe it!' he says. 'I'm free! Please, give me some water, fetch me some fruit!' You do as he asks and sit and watch whilst he quenches hundreds of years' worth of hunger and thirst. It is not long before he is full – there's not much room left inside of him.

'Thank you, thank you!' he says, 'I'm feeling a lot better,' he says. He gives you an appraising look. 'Now, for your reward. Follow me, mortal!' He sets off towards the headwaters of the Styx and the cave in the mountains.

► **469**

514

‘The question is – who will wear the Royal Diadem?’ you ask silkily. ‘Ena, Dio or Tria?’

The heads turn to look at each other.

‘Obviously, number one should wear it,’ says Ena.

‘Hah! That would make a mockery of kingship,’ says Tria.

‘Surely even you two, blind fools that you are, can see that it should be me!’ says Dio.

And so it goes… As they argue, you casually move closer.

If you have the **kingslayer dagger** and wish to use it ► **483**

If you have some **lamia venom** and you want to use that ► **599**

If not, you are close enough to launch a surprise attack ► **183**

515

You flee pell-mell into a forest of gnarled trees to the east where you lose death’s champion. You can hear him blundering about, until finally he gives up.

‘If you can hear me, coward, know that I will find you again. Death cannot be denied!’ he shouts, before riding away. Gain the codeword ***Nemesis***.

You emerge from your hiding place in the trees and look around. ► **228**

516

Slowly, the eyes move towards you, and the sound of sobbing fills the air around you. Despite your best efforts, you find yourself paralysed with horror. Out of the shadowy alcove appears a child-like form, robed in tattered shadows. Her pale face, lined with tears of blood, comes up close to yours. And then she notices the **child's doll** you are carrying.

'Mother, is that you?' whispers the apparition in a tortured voice.

Suddenly, her benighted face turns into a mask of rage, and out of the ragged darkness that surrounds her, a ghostly hand bearing a crimson stained dagger thrusts for your chest. You flinch back but you are not quick enough and it sinks into your shoulder. Tick your Wound box.

If you were already wounded, you die here in the bottom of a haunted well slain by a the ghost of a girl. The gods may take pity on you, though ► **111**

However, if you still live ► **576**

517

You have come to the Lake Cocytus, where you rescued Orphea, or ‘Lady Rapscallion’ as she is known, after which she robbed you blind. She’d gone fishing out on the icy lake, looking for an heirloom, or so she claimed. The hole in the ice is still out there. Will you:

Try some fishing yourself ► **800**

Leave this place ► **586**

518

With a sudden shriek of ‘I’ve got you now!’ she changes her shape in a matter of seconds. Where once stood a beautiful young woman now stands a hideous vampire lamia, half snake, half woman. ‘I am Mormo,’ she hisses, ‘and you slew my sister!’

You are completely caught off guard as she wraps the coils of her snake body around you and sinks her fangs into your neck. Venom courses through your veins…. You try to fight back but you sink into unconsciousness in moments.

► **701**

519

Mark your CHARM score as −1, then ► 459

520

‘Perhaps I can help,’ you say.

‘What, to die? OK, I’m all ears,’ she says, folding her golden arms with a clang.

If you have some **Lethe water**, the waters of forgetfulness, you could offer that. Or you could try **Aphrodite’s kiss**, if you have one.

Lethe water ► **316**

Aphrodite’s kiss ► **747**

You have neither or don’t wish to use them ► **466**

521

If you have the **sceptre of Agamemnon**, roll a die. If you score a 1 or a 2 ►336. If not, read on.

If you have the codeword ***Nibble*** ►782. If not, read on.

This part of the underworld is even more gloomy and grey as the great granite mountains of the north tower over it, blocking out what meagre light there is. Nearby you see what is basically a hole in the ground.

Cautiously, you peer over the side. Up wafts an unpleasant odour, like nothing you have ever smelt before. You can also hear the faint sounds of screaming or perhaps it is the whistling of the wind, you are not sure.

Anyway, short of jumping to your certain death, there seems to be no way of getting down there.

From here you can head:

West ► 12
North to the mountains ► 226
East to the Acheron ► 821
South to the Black Bayou ► 273

522

You step out from the cover of the cypress trees and down to the beach where the *Threnody* is still moored. The crew are readying the catafalque for your funeral. At the sight you, Hydna looks up in surprise.

‘Did you make a run for it?’ she asks.

‘No, I have slain the king of the hydras,’ you reply.

‘No way!’ she says, astonished. You shrug and nod.

‘I don’t believe it!’ says Hydna, sending one of her crew to check. She comes back confirming the kill.

‘Told you,’ you say.

‘Wow, you truly are the hero of the Vulcanverse,’ she says. ‘Amazing. I guess we can take you back now then – for free this time!’

She takes you back to the edge of the Black Bayou, where you take your leave.

‘Come back and visit!’ she says, as you leave.

► **796**

523

You kill as many as you can in the water, and then run frantically up and down the barge, stamping and hacking as they swarm aboard. The bargeman helps too, and soon you have slaughtered most of the foul, stinking rats but there are so many that you suffer several rat bites before they flee.

Tick the Wound box on your Adventure Sheet. If you are already wounded, you are so weakened that the wounds become infected and you die slowly in a fevered delirium ► **111**; if not, read on.

Their ripped flesh and guts befoul the decks, together you wash them down and into the sea. However, one rat you thought was particularly bloated had in fact swallowed a **Lava Gem**. Note it on your Adventure Sheet. Once you've cleaned up, you sail on. ► **364**

524

The ghostly bargeman slowly punts the *Sea Shadow* up the thick black waters of the Styx. Silence reigns, save for the gentle lapping of the water ‘gainst the bows. It’s quite relaxing in fact.

‘What is your name?’ you ask the bargeman.

He hesitates for a moment. ‘I… I can’t remember,’ he whispers hoarsely.

‘What shall I call you then?’ you say.

He shrugs. ‘What does it matter?’ he croaks.

You are sailing up the Styx, the River of Hate. Roll two dice:

score 2-5: river pirates! ► **62**

score 6-8: a trader’s barge ► **662**

score 9-12: a reed basket ► **727**

525

You manage to throw yourself forward just at the two bellies crash together with a ringing clang. Thank all the gods you weren’t caught! The statues draw back once more. You cannot tell what set them off, so you’ll have to just dive through the next time. If there is a next time…

Ahead, the chamber opens out into a large space. You step into it.

► **698**

526

‘I think I have the very thing,’ says Protagoras. ‘Remember Zeno of the Eleatic school?’

‘Ah yes, another great philosopher, he of the dialectic and the paradox!’ says Aspasia.

‘Indeed, now, one of his paradoxes is this.’ Protagoras stands and clears his throat. You fold your arms.

‘Now imagine an arrow – shot from the bow of our adventurer here, for instance. Before it can hit its target, it must get halfway there, yes?’

‘Agreed,’ says Xenophanes.

‘Drone on, you old fool,’ says Aristippus, ‘whilst I take your food from your plate!’

Protagoras frowns down at his emptying plate, but continues nevertheless.

‘Before the arrow can get halfway there, it must get a quarter of the way there. Before travelling a quarter, it has to travel one eighth, before an eighth, a sixteenth, and so on.’ You raise an eyebrow.

‘Pah, utter sophistry!’ says Cleanthes.

‘Well, yes,’ says Protagoras the Sophist, ‘but the point is that for the arrow to reach its target it must complete what will be an infinite number of tasks, which is, of course, impossible even for one such as our hero here. Therefore all motion is an illusion!’

‘Yes, yes, one of his dichotomies. We should think on it, not as a reality but as a tool of the mind. To wrestle with such logic will teach us humility, the limits of human understanding, of knowing that there are things we cannot know,’ says Cleanthes.

‘Hah, what a waste of time! All I need to know is that this almond tart, stolen from Protagoras’ plate, tastes the sweeter for it!’ says Aristippus.

‘All very well, but how does this concern our adventuring hero?’ says Aspasia.

‘Because I have it. Here! Look, Zeno’s arrow!’ Protagoras draws an arrow out of his satchel. It has a white shaft, beautiful goose feather fletching, a good steel arrowhead. The words ‘Zeno’s arrow’ have been etched into the shaft in red paint.

‘I give it to you as your reward for helping us to prove that all things come to those that wait!’

► 19

527

Half way up the side of the latrine, and your foot slips, followed soon after by your hands… You fall backward to land with a crash into some… well, unpleasantness. Your clothes are smeared with human waste, and you smell bad. Very bad. Note that you have **stains x 1**. You will have to deduct 1 from the next CHARM roll you make. After that is resolved, you may cross the **stains** off. You pick yourself up out of the filth, and start your way back up. ► **419**

528

You have returned to the painter, Apelles. Well, ex-painter maybe. He has lost all his talent. For now, he is still gazing at the fiery Phlegethon river, whose flaming waters fill the grey skies of Hades with a reddish, luminescent glow. The river banks are too hot and charred for anything to grow there, but further away, a few white poplars grow, their bone-white bark seeming to sparkle with crimson light in the glow from the river of fire. Off to the right, where the Styx meets the Phlegethon, steam roils upward, in ruby-edged clouds of vapour. There are a couple more finished paintings by his side. You grimace at the sight of them. Most of them look like this:

Poor old fool. Still, this might be worth a try. You tap him on the shoulder – he turns in surprise.

‘Adventurer! Hello, hello!’

‘This might help,’ you say. ‘Apparently you wrote it,’ and you give him the Painter’s Handbook by Master Apelles.

Apelles stares at it for what seems an age. ‘Oh yes…’ he mutters and starts reading. After a while, he stands up, screams loudly, takes his

paintings and throws them into the flaming river. He rasps at you gruffly ‘I remember now. Stand here, stay still and shut up,’ pointing at the spot you stood last time for a portrait. You haven’t got anything to lose, so why not? Once again, you pose for your portrait. He takes a while, muttering to himself the whole time, but finally it is done. This time it is a magnificent portrait of a hero in hell set against an astonishing background of glowing ruby light. A truly great work of art.

‘There,’ he says. ‘I’m back. This one is called *A Hero in Hell*. Take it, with my thanks, and now, buzz off. I’ve got work to do.’

Note **A Hero in Hell by Apelles** on your Adventure Sheet. There is nothing to do here for now. Will you head:

North ► **60**
West ► **330**
South-west ► **504**
South to the Phlegethon ► **169**
South-east ► **193**

529

You run over the river of lava, scoop some of it up using whatever you had to hand in your backpack, and pour it over one of the bronze links. You do this a couple of times until it is weakened enough for Prometheus himself to snap it with ease.

With a great roar of triumph, Prometheus rises up. He staggers for a moment, having been imprisoned and weakened for so long but the very magic that punished him by regenerating his liver every day, also gives him strength. With one great stride forward, he grabs the eagle and rips it apart in shower of blood and feathers. You step back as he throws the remains to the ground and stamps upon them over and over again, till there is nothing left but a red paste. Hardly a surprise, you think to yourself, given the length of his suffering but still...

Eventually he comes to his senses and turns to you both.

► **650**

530

‘Mormo? Mistress of serpents. Beware, for unlike her sister, Davora, who is dull witted and filled with lust, Mormo is cunning and clever. She is a vampire, half woman, half snake, but also a shape-changer; she can appear in the form of a beautiful young maiden and does so often, to lure foolish young men to their doom. A tragic figure, for she was not always so. Once she was a mortal mother, but she offended the gods and they cursed her with madness so that she killed and ate her own children. It is said that she cries bitter tears of blood every night. Only hatred and sorrow are left in her heart now.’

Go back and choose again ► **198**

531

The bandits look at each other.

‘Whadd’ya think, Geor… err.. great Achilles?’

‘Yeah, easy money, mighty Talos, enough to get us out of this dead place once and for all!’

You hand over the money and they depart.

‘Thank you!’ says Alex without thinking.

‘Hey, you don’t have to say thank you, you idiot, we’re supposed to be terrifying bandits, not polite as you please do-gooders!’ says Georgios. They continue in this vein as they walk away. Time to move on. Will you go:

North ► **51**
South ► **537**
West ► **228**
South-east to the Slimeswamp ► **38**
Follow the river north-east ► **504**

532

You hear the faint sound of a flute in the distance – Orphea, looking for vengeance once more! Quickly you hurry on as fast as you. You can go:

North to the Gate of Tears ► **686**

West to the lake ► **639**

Follow the road to the south-west ► **731**

533

You shimmy up the tree and out onto one of its highest branches, and then gracefully leap onto the roof. After examining the eaves of the roof, you find a small window close enough for you to swing down and slip through into a storeroom of some kind. You open the storeroom door, and poke your head out into a corridor. No one to be seen or heard. You venture out to explore the palace – it seems mostly deserted. After all, it isn't a palace of the living with servants, cleaners, courtiers and all the rest, bustling around. It's a palace of the dead.

After a while, you find another storeroom. There are amphorae, barrels and a chest or two largely empty. However, your attention is drawn to a long, thin, rune-inscribed box, just about the right size to contain Agamemnon's staff-like sceptre.

► **392**

534

‘Heard of you? Umm… no, I haven’t but unless... I mean, I’ve heard of Socrates and Plato? Does that help!

‘Aiiee! I knew it, those charlatans!’

‘They stole our names, stole our thoughts, our writings, took all the credit, the stinking thieves!’

‘And now everybody has heard of them, and no one knows we even lived,’ says Plota, bitterly.

‘As if existence itself were entirely dependent on the memories of others.’ says Sacrotes wistfully.

‘Interesting proposition – do we exist if there is no one else to hear our words or see our deeds?’ says Plota.

‘Hmm… Finally we can ascribe a reason for your existence, Plota. You are here only to validate *my* existence.’ says Sacrotes.

‘Oh, very amusing. But either way, here we both are in Hades, nothing but shadows on a wall, seen only through the flickering half-light of a dying fire, soon to fade from the pages of history forever.’

They shake their heads despairingly.

If you have **Zeno’s arrow** ► 37

If not, there nothing more to do here, so you return to the bar ► 465

535

The **bone flute of Koré** makes a sweet sound when played. As Koré is another name for Persephone, the consort of Hades and Queen of the Underworld, perhaps it will have an effect.

Make a CHARM roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **47**

Fail ► **424**

536

‘Hello again, adventurer!’ says the barber, Davides. ‘Back for another haircut and some nail work? Athena knows where you get all that dirt, blood, cuts and nicks from, but I’ll clean it all up for you. It’ll cost you 10 pyr this time though. I mean, I can’t do it for free for ever right?’

Do you want a haircut and a manicure?

Say yes and take a seat ► **682**

Say no, and leave ► **75**

537

The dismal grey skies of Hades blanket the land in gloom and you can almost taste the misery of dashed hopes on the air itself. You are trudging across the endless grey, in between the Delta of Darkness to your west, and the Slimeswamp to the east. To the north, a bridge leads across the river Styx leads towards the City of the Dead.

If you have the codeword ***Neophyte***, ► **354**. If not, read on.

Something catches your eye nearby – a flash of colour.

Investigate the flash ► **617**

Go east to the Slimeswamp ► **38**

Cross the bridge to the north ► **145**

Go south to the Sacred Way ► **306**

Head west to the delta ► **493**

538

You have bitten off more than you can chew, which is not the case with Blubberjaw. He hugs you in his deadly embrace, engulfing you completely in great rolls of hot fat... You cannot move, and you are slowly baked in his arms like a leg of lamb. Mercifully you die before Blubberjaw begins to slowly munch his way through you. The gods however, take pity on you.

► **111**

539

‘I have some waters of Lethe,’ you say.

‘By Hekate, whose heart is darkness, really?’ A look of almost-happiness passes across her face. ‘Give it me, I beg you!’ she says.

You hand her the bottle. Without hesitating, she takes a drink. Cross off a dose of the **Lethe water**. If it is used up, do not cross the **Lethe water** off, simply put **x 0** beside it. You may be able to refill it later...

‘Thank you’ she says, ‘Soon I will forget everything and be free! Here, have this.’

She hands you her dagger.

‘It is called Kingslayer,’ says Klytemnestra, ‘May it serve you well.’ And then something, that spark of a someone, fades from her eyes. She looks around. ‘Who are you? Or perhaps more importantly, who am I!’ she says laughing. ‘No matter… I must… Perhaps, no, no.’ She gets up, fidgeting, and wanders away into the Mourning Fields, muttering to herself and occasionally giggling.

► **615**

540

As quiet as you can, you edge your way into the Temple of Arachne. It is long and low with four great pillars along each side, and a well-lit pathway running down the middle to the far end. The walls are hung with beautifully woven tapestries, showing the story of the contest between the goddess Athena and the weaver, Arachne. In the end, Athena, angry at Arachne's mortal hubris and jealous of her skill in weaving, curses her, turning her and all her descendants into spiders, so that they might weave forever, endlessly spinning webs. And here, in this temple in the swamps of Hades, her children have made their home. You avoid the centrally lit walkway, and make your way down one shadowed side to the altar. As you draw nearer, a terrifying sight makes you pull up short. Tending to the altar is a hideous creature – her bottom half the body of a spider, her top half similar to the torso of a human woman, but knobbed and ridged with cartilage. A spiderling, spawn of Arachne. Suddenly, she turns her head and sniffs.

If you have **stains x 1** or **stink x 1** ► **85**

If you have neither ► **286**

541

You must fight the Caucasian eagle. It will be hard, perhaps the hardest fight of your life, and that is with Deucalion also fighting by your side, for he has stepped up.

Make a STRENGTH or GRACE roll at difficulty 10.

Succeed ► **501**

Fail ► **619**

542

You have already been into the crypts, where you slew the daemon Trapjaw and took the fabled wings of Icarus. There is nothing left in there but deadly traps and darkness. Will you go:

East to the volcano ► 405
West to the Slimeswamp ► 25
North to the mountains ► 60
North-west to the land between the Phlegethon and the Styx ► 711
West to the river Phlegethon ► 169

543

To see what you find, roll a die.

score 1-2: a super-heated lava gem explodes in your face, gain 1 scar.

score 3-4: you find a tablet of curses. Lose all your blessings if you have any.

score 5-6: while you are bent over sifting through the dirt an enterprising pickpocket steals 50 pyr (or all, if you have less than 50) from your backpack.

When you are done, will you:

Climb to the top ► **789**

Explore the mountainside ► **644**

Leave the volcano ► **410**

544

You clean up the altar, and place the **statuette of Ares** on top. It slots into place. Cross it off your Adventure Sheet. Then you say a prayer to man-slaughtering Ares, insatiable in battle, soul-spiller and hell-filler, to consecrate the shrine.

The altar appears to pulse with power for a moment. Behind you, strange sounds fill the gloom of Hades. You turn… The dead that littered the old battlefield are stirring! The warriors rise up. You fear for your life but they are not interested in you. Instead, the red shields face off against the black shields, spear to spear, shield to shield and they do battle. A homage to their dread lord, Ares. It seems they will fight forever, an eternal battle in honour to the war god.

But now the shrine is active. If you are a worshipper of Ares, blessings are free. If not, you must pay 10 pyr per blessing. You can have a total of three blessings at a time. Each blessing can be used to roll again when you fail an attribute check (CHARM, GRACE, INGENUITY or STRENGTH) but only once in any given situation – so if you fail the re-roll, you can't spend another blessing to try again.

Get the codeword **New-Ares** and then ► 117

545

Suddenly, behind the shade warriors, something huge writhes up out of the water with a screeching roar. It is a massive tentacled creature, like an enormous squid the size of a house.

‘Aieee, a kraken!’ screams one of the Argonauts. You step back, weapon at the ready. The kraken reaches for the three warrior shades with multiple tentacles, picks them up as if they were bread sticks and swallows them down, armour and everything, all in a few seconds.

In this case, discretion is the better part of valour. Whilst the kraken is engaged in a quick dinner, you hide yourself behind the altar to Hypnos.

After the screaming has finished, you poke your head out. The kraken smacks its beak contentedly and then sinks below the waves and out of sight. It is safe to come out.

You decide to investigate where the three recently eaten Argonauts had set up their campfire.

► **307**

546

The people you freed are all slaughtered to a man – or woman – but in the chaos you are able to make your way out of the swamps without being detected. They died so that you may live. On the other hand, they would have died anyway... And perhaps you can return and do a better job next time. ► 25

547

Whilst she is on her knees weeping, you strike her down. She dies at your feet, sobbing, clasping the doll to her bosom. ‘My children, my dear ones, Mummy is coming!’ are the last words of Mormo, Vampire lamia…. You wonder what her story was, how she became what she was. Nevertheless, she was too dangerous to mankind to allow to live. Who knows how many future victims you have saved by this act?

Gain the codeword ***Neutralised***.

On her body you find 100 pyr and a bottle labelled **Dione’s blood**. You can take back the **child’s doll**. Also, you are able to extract some **lamia venom**. Note any acquisitions on your Adventure Sheet.

After you’ve disposed of her body, you leave your house and return to the City of the Dead.

► **10**

548

‘Eh? A talking butterfly? What the… And man is but a dream? Pah, nonsense, man is food!’ says Trapjaw, the daemon in the dark.

In the time he has taken to say those words, the butterfly’s light has grown. In its ruby glow you can make out a hideous form. The head is human-like, but pale grey with three short sharp horns on either side of its hairless skull, red glowing eyes, fangs, claws – and massive, snapping jaws of bone where its chest should be! Trapjaw of the Crypts of Darkness. A hideous monstrosity from the depths of hell indeed.

The butterfly shines brightly, its flickering ruby light bathing the tomb, and Trapjaw, in an incongruous rosy glow. Trapjaw hisses, and puts a taloned hand over his eyes, momentarily blinded.

Make a STRENGTH or a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **481**

Fail ► **229**

549

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **41** immediately. If not, read on.

You root through the dragon shaped heap of ashes but it becomes clear the shape is entirely random. You find nothing but 3 pyr and an old sandal. You pocket the money and throw the sandal away.

► **608**

550

If you have the codeword ***Nanny*** ► 798 immediately. If not, read on.

The tomb is ancient indeed, with centuries of ash heaped over it. The portico is set back via a paved walkway that cuts into the mound, walled in brick. The doorway has a corbel arch, and is sealed shut, a design so ancient, it must date back to the Trojan wars at least. There are no inscriptions, carvings, friezes, murals or anything else to suggest who or what is buried here. You cannot get in either.

If you have the **Panoply of the Lost Hero** ► 277

If not, there is nothing you can do here but leave this area ► 749

551

Some bits and pieces come bobbing along the river towards the barge. Curious, you fish a few things out of the river as you pass. Most you throw back but one of them is a small box of carved wood, painted rather beautifully with gods and heroes. Inside you find a collection of paint powders – red and yellow ochre, lead white and so on. Note the **box of paints** on your Adventure Sheet. Will you:

Continue to the delta ► **762**
Debark onto the south bank ► **537**
Debark onto the north bank ► **51**

552

‘Hah, hah, wrong, fool!’ mocks the silver minotaur face. ‘The doors shall remain shut!’

‘Don’t we get another chance?’ you ask.

‘No, of course not, that’s it!’ replies the face.

‘Well, what now then?’ asks Deucalion.

‘You slowly die of thirst I guess,’ says the face. ‘Goodbye!’ with that the silver minotaur closes his eyes and appears to go back to sleep.

You and Deucalion exchange a despairing glance. But then you have an idea. ‘Perhaps I can talk our way out of this,’ you say. If you have the codewords ***Namesake*** or ***Nihilism*** (or both) ► **710** immediately. If not, read on.

Make a CHARM roll at difficulty 9.

Succeed ► **123**

Fail ► **689**

553

You sing of his prowess as the great leader of the Greeks in the Trojan war, said to be one of the three greatest Greek warriors after Achilles, but then you forget yourself and sing of how he fell out with Achilles, nearly causing the Greeks to lose the whole war, and how he also sacrificed his own daughter to propitiate the gods – which only angered them, naturally. And how his wife took her vengeance by murdering him in the bath, hardly a noble way for a great warrior to die.

The captain of the bridge and all of his men are shaking their spectral heads. Your lyric poem has not gone down well.

'I really don't think the King will want to hear that song, no, not at all. Best you don't come in. Be on our way, unless you want to feel the points of our spears!' You will have to try and find another way to cross the River of Stars.

► **356**

554

Two of the hydra’s heads snap down at you, intent on biting your head clean off. You try to dodge them both.

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **411**

Fail ► **386**

555

Before you stands a great sculpted portico of shining black granite, held up by two caryatid pillars. One is of Hades, prince of the dead, glaring down at you, the other is Vulcan, the renowned artificer, his brow furrowed in concentration. The doors are of beaten copper, inlaid with jade and ruby patterns of a three headed dog, a serpent, a hammer and tongs. You have found the Vault of Vulcan in Hades.

Enter the vault ► **444**

Go back up the stairs ► **155**

556

The kraken gulps down the fish. All the rivers of Hades are inter-connected. The kraken can take you safely through the waters, cradled in its tentacles to wherever you would like to go on the river system and drop you off. Where to on the kraken express?

Bridge over the Styx ► **145**
Headwaters of the Styx ► **60**
Northern Styx ► **330**
The confluence of the rivers Styx and Phlegethon ► **504**
Bridge over the Acheron ► **821**
The Black Bayou ► **273**
Acheron meets the delta ► **3**
Mid-Acheron ► **588**

557

You head through the crumbling temple to Hades, and out the other side. You spot Tantalus stowing the winged chariot and the bronze bulls in an old wooden shed, once used as a Temple store. He shuts the doors and turns – and his jaw drops in surprise at the sight of you.

'How did you…' he stutters in astonishment.

'Get out of the tomb you imprisoned me in?' you ask wryly.

'Umm…'

'I think I'm going to kill you now,' you say, stepping forward.

'Hah, I am not so easy to kill!' he says. 'But still, there's no need for bloodshed. Perhaps we can come to some agreement?'

'What, like last time? You betrayed me literally minutes later, and I'd just free you from an eternity of torment!' you say, taking another step forward and drawing your weapon.

'All right, I'll give you the golden dog, as I promised.'

'That was for freeing you, what do I get for letting you live?'

'You can have the chariot too. I'll leave, never come back. Why risk our lives over such things?'

Agree to the deal ► **389**

Attack ► **739**

558

‘I do not know,’ says Tiresias.

‘What!’ You cry in outrage, ‘I’ve paid you – twice!’

‘Ah, but I know who does. King Lycaon himself, lord of the wolves. You must find and ask him. He lives in the heart of the Deep Forest in Arcadia.’

‘I see, find and talk to the king of the wolves. What could possibly go wrong, eh?’ you comment wryly. Tiresias gives you a ‘whatever’ smile.

Go back and choose again ► **198**

559

The ancient voices of the dead sound in your ear loudly, like a chorus of yelling madness. Some of it you cannot make out, it is like an unintelligible yammering, but amidst the cacophonous noise a few phrases can be understood:

‘Twelve wise men shall drink the wine and eat the cake.’

‘Some are catapulted into Elysium, others must sing for their supper.’

‘Paris lost his life, his Helen and 189 other things.’

‘The lizard of the river fears the water of the horse of the river.’

‘Do not meet your fate without honey cake!’

Make of them what you will. When you are ready, you can try again or head off.

Leave an offering of 10 pyr ► **740**

Leave the area ► **610**

560

You pull the lever – in a flash you are hurled through space at the speed of an arrow. Nausea washes over you as bright lights pierce your brain. You come to a soul-juddering stop and promptly throw up. A passing shade, heading to a nearby building quips, ‘Too much wine at the inn, eh? Tsk, some people never learn.’

► **579**

561

Calling upon silver tongued Apollo, you sing her an ancient lullaby, one that has lulled many a child to sleep over the years, and you sing it beautifully. Her rage seems to fade away, along with the writhing shadows that surround her. Her pale face, lined with tears of blood, comes up close to yours as if to kiss your cheek.

And then suddenly she is gone in a rush of ragged darkness. You catch your breath and look down. Something compels you to take the silver buckles from the body of the murdered girl and sew them onto your own shoes. Moments later, you forget that they are there. Nevertheless, note on your Adventure Sheet that you have **silver buckles**.

You make your way back up to the top of the well. Time to leave this place.

► **412**

562

That makes sense. You spent a few hours fishing and bring home a good catch for supper. You can still smell that fish frying in the pan with garlic and herbs, still taste the succulent flesh on your mother’s wheat cakes with a squeeze of lemon. Of course, in a dream every meal is perfect.

Now ► **459**

563

Something slinks out of the shadowed cave mouth. It appears at first glance to be a wolf, but this is no ordinary wolf. Its skin seems – wait, there is no skin, it is all raw, bloody muscle and bone! Its eyes are pits of night wherein glow two pinpricks of reddish light. The great sinews of its jaws glisten with ichor and its teeth drip black saliva. He throws back its dead head and howls, a bone chilling sound that fills your soul with dread. The phrase ‘those who hear his howl are doomed’ pops into your head. You have heard vague rumours of a creature called Wolfshadow, He who Howls in Darkness, an undead beast that relentlessly pursues its victims across the Vulcanverse. This must be it.

Will you:

Fight ► **129**

Flee ► **91**

564

The Sacred Way is a huge road that surrounds all the quadrants, made of paved stone. You are at its southernmost point in Hades. To the west is the Delta of Darkness, to the north, are open plains, and to the east, the Sacred Way continues on. Will you:

Go east along the road ► **731**
Go west to the delta ► **493**
North to the plain ► **537**

565

If you have the codeword ***Namesake*** ► **381** immediately. If not, read on.

If you have a **bronze butterfly** ► **478**. If not, read on.

You have returned to the philosophers' picnic. They are still there, arguing about... well, everything and anything. Whatever anyone says, someone else says the opposite just for the sake of it.

Aspasia welcomes you. 'Have you come with a proof of Zeno's arrow paradox? Or perhaps you can enlighten us on the dream of a butterfly?' she asks.

'Not yet,' you reply. 'Perhaps later.'

You overhear Aristippus asking someone to pass the honey.

'Ah, but how do I know that what you mean by honey is what I mean by honey? I might pass you the salt, instead!' you hear someone say. Shaking your head, you decide there is nothing more for you to do here, so you leave them to their 'picnic'. ► **144**

566

Rhadamanthus, Judge of the Dead greets you. ‘Ah, the mortal adventurer! I trust you are pleased with your home in Elysium? I gave you one of the best houses you know!’

You nod politely.

‘Well, avail yourself,’ he says, gesturing around the Hall of Hades.

There are three exits here – back the way you came, into the throne room or to a stairwell heading down. Will you:

Leave ► **10**

Go to the throne room ► **708**

Head to the stairs ► **163**

567

☐☐☐

If three boxes are now ticked ► 261 immediately. If not, put a tick in one of the boxes and then read on.

You can place any *one* of these items in the hand of Midas. If you do, add ‘golden, +100 pyr’ to the name of that item on your Adventure Sheet. That item no longer functions as it once did (for instance, a hardwood club no longer adds 1 to STRENGTH) and cannot be used for anything else either. However, it can be sold at a market for an extra 100 pyr. You can place only *one* object at a time per visit.

laurel wreath
recurve bow
hornbook
hardwood club
fresh fish
statuette of Ares
clockwork owl
komos cup
lobster pot
phoenix feather
arrow of Artemis

If you place the **arrow of Artemis** in Midas’s hand, replace it on your Adventure Sheet with the **golden arrow of Artemis**. You cannot (and really should not) sell this.

When you are finished ► 601

568

☐

Put a tick in a box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **509** immediately; otherwise read on.

The sceptre of Agamemnon stirs. Tendrils of darkness waft up from it to climb up your arm. It feels as if the night itself was creeping into your heart. A quiet whisper sounds inside your head. ‘Greetings, mortal, I am Nyx, queen of the night.’ And then she is gone.

Now turn to the paragraph number written in your Current Location box.

569

The ice suddenly falls apart under your feet and you fall into the freezing waters of Lake Cocytus. The cold is so biting that you are barely able to breathe. If you are wounded already, you are too weak to withstand the enervating chill, and you slip beneath the waves, to drown at the bottom of the frozen lake. You manage one last prayer to the gods, in the hope they will take pity on you before your heart is chilled into silence ► **111**.

If you still live, you manage to crawl out of the hole. You hurry to the shore to build a fire and warm your frozen bones, but you suffer a nasty frostbite on your hands and feet. Tick the Wound box on your Adventure Sheet. Not only that, you are covered in the sulphurous waters of the Cocytus and you smell like a fart. Note that you have **stink x 1**. Your next CHARM roll is at −1. After that is resolved, the smell wears off, and you can cross the 'item' off.

When you are ready to leave this place ► **586**

570

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 360 immediately; otherwise read on.

Someone has set up a stall or shop on the side of the road, here in the Asphodel Meadows. Well, at least it looks like a shop. There are literally no goods laid out; its shelves are bare. Behind the counter there is a shade dressed in a pale, white apron and a grey cap.

'Who are you?' you ask, and what is this?'

'I am Perseus,' says the shade in a chirpy but nevertheless sepulchral voice.

'Perseus? Son of Zeus? He who slew the Medusa?' you ask, incredulous.

'No, no, not that Perseus, obviously. I was famous in my own way, though,' says the shade.

'And how was that?' you ask. 'With a name like that, another warrior perhaps? Or a great athlete?'

'Umm… no, not really. It was… well, it was cakes. I made honey cakes. Best baker in Boeotia, that's me.'

'So, you set up a cake stall. Here in Hades?' you ask incredulously, pointing at the endless meadows, the grey skies and the occasional passing dead soul.

'I know, I know, but I had a dream once. The Fates came to me and said "honey cakes in Tartarus are the future," or something like that. Anyway, what else could I do? This is all I know,' grates the shade in his ghostly voice.

'But in any case, there are no cakes,' you point out.

'Well, what do you expect? Where would I get the ingredients, here in hell, eh?' says the shade.

'Hah! Interesting. What do you need?' you ask, your curiosity piqued.

'Not much, just some honey and grain.'

If you have some **pomegranate honey** and some **farmlands grain** and give it to Perseus ► 283; otherwise read on.

'I'll see what I can do,' you say. There is nothing more to do here, so you take your leave of Perseus the baker.

► 75

571

Thankfully, your precipitous fall starts slowing down, until you come to a full halt, hovering in the air, in total darkness. You are able to gently step down onto to a hard surface.

A light blazes up nearby. ‘There,’ says Deucalion,’ holding up his lit lantern, ‘we made it!’

You are in a rough chamber, hewn out of solid rock. The floor is covered with dirt and detritus, the remains of things that have fallen into this hole over the years.

One side of the chamber has a massive set of iron doors set into it. There are no door handles but instead, in the middle, hangs a bronze visage, the face of a gorgon, all snake hair and fangs.

Suddenly the eyes flick open.

‘Wha... what? Is someone there?’ says the door-face in a surprisingly pleasant voice.

You and Deucalion stare in surprise.

‘Umm... yes, we’re here,’ says Deucalion.

‘Mortals? Live mortals?’ says the door-face. ‘What are you doing here?’

‘We’re here to rescue Prometheus,’ says Deucalion.

‘What? Oh yes! Of course, of course you are. That’s why I’m here, yes, yes, I remember now – it’s been so long! Anyway, I’m supposed to set you a puzzle, if you solve it, I’ll open the door for you. Now...what was it?’

You fold your arms. Deucalion taps a foot impatiently.

‘Ah yes! So, at a philosophers’ picnic, ten philosophers had wine, eight had cake, and six had both wine and cake. How many philosophers were there at the picnic?’

‘Any idea, Deucalion?’ you say.

‘Me? I grew up so fast there was no time for a proper education. It’s a miracle I can even speak, let alone do maths!’

It looks like you will have to give the answer. What will you say?

Ten ► **758**

Eighteen ► **268**

Twelve ► **442**

572

You place the **clockwork owl** on the marble pedestal (remember to delete it from your possessions) and it clicks into place perfectly. Then you recite a prayer to Athena, and the clockwork owl whirrs into life!

You have successfully reconsecrated this shrine, and now you can get blessings here. If you are a worshipper of Athena, blessings are free. If not, you must pay 10 pyr per blessing. You can have a total of three blessings at a time. Each blessing can be used to roll again when you fail an attribute check (CHARM, GRACE, INGENUITY or STRENGTH) but only once in any given situation – so if you fail the re-roll, you can't spend another blessing to try again.

Get the codeword ***New-Athena*** and ► **412**

573

You take aim and shoot – your arrows fly true, bursting the padlocks that hold his chains in place. They fall away. Unfettered, his great blubbery body spills out in great rolls of fat, virtually immobilising him. You are able to close in, cutting great gobbets of fat off the obscene mass that is Blubberjaw at will, until he is dead. ► 247

574

If you have the codeword ***Nest*** ► **446**

Helen greets you warmly – well, as warmly as a shade can. ‘Perhaps you can help me. I want to open up another Inn. The land of the dead is not exactly the best place for such things. No, the lands of the living are where it’s at,’ she explains.

Helen, the spectral innkeeper, wants to open a chain of inns across the Vulcanverse, starting with Arcadia. Ambitious indeed.

‘But you’re dead!’ you exclaim.

‘And that’s why I need a silver seal of Hades, a pass out of the underworld. But still, I’ll be a shade, a ghost amongst the living, so I’ll need someone to front it all too. You interested? Don’t worry, you can be the face that launched a thousand inns, but I’ll do all the work. What do you say?’

If you agree to Helen’s plan ► **230**

If not, you can always take her up on it later ► **465**

575

A sorrowful fate indeed but there is little you can do. Musing on the nature of love and tragedy, you leave the tomb. Will you:

Visit the baths ► **182**

Explore further ► **26**

Leave the fields ► **10**

576

‘What kind of mother are you?’ shrieks the vengeful spirit into your face as she stabs at you once more. Will you:

Fight ► **463**

Try to appease the spirit ► **309**

577

□

Put a tick in a box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **718** immediately. If not, read on.

You find a stairwell in the far corner of the Chamber of the Furies. It spirals downward to you know not what but at least it is well lit, with torch brackets on the wall. Strangely, the torches do not seem to burn down, they seem endless. The stairs are covered in dust but without a mark. No one has trod this path in a long, long time...

As you descend, you leave footprints in the dust.

► **622**

578

There is a deep, bubbling rumble from the depths of the river.

‘Acheron eruption!’ says the bargeman in the loudest dead man’s whisper he can muster.

You look over the side of the barge. A great bubble of water is welling up from the depths. Suddenly it explodes over the barge like a bursting boil. Roll one die.

score 1-2: riverbed mud ► **135**

score 3-4: a treasure ► **204**

score 5-6: fresh fish ► **297**

579

You have to come to the far south western corner of Hades, near the Sacred Way that encircles the Vulcanverse. Nearby you can see a ramshackle old tower, now re-purposed as an inn by the look of it. A tattered sign hangs out the door – the Inn of the White Poplars. Behind it is a small wood but its trees are gnarled, leafless and withered. These aren't earthly poplars though; these ones grow only in Hades, their bark is as white as bone, and their leaves are as black as death. They are sacred to Hades. Will you:

Enter the inn ► **50**
North along the road ► **346**
East to the delta ► **493**

580

Gain the codeword ***Nicked***.

You walk into the hollowed out cavern that is the lair of the king of the hydras. It stinks in here, very badly indeed. Holding your nose, you look around. Skeletal remains of humans are piled up near the entrance, notably not a single skull amongst them. Seems he liked to swallow those whole!

Further back, you find some heaped treasures… Note these on your Adventure Sheet. **Persephone's key**, a **hardwood club**, a **box of paints** and 250 pyr. A nice haul indeed. You leave the lair – hopefully the barge you came on will be waiting for you.

► **522**

581

As you draw near to the strange door, the runes blaze up so bright you are momentarily blinded. The stone door bursts open with a thunderous crack and something – you can't quite see – slithers out with horrifying speed, lunging at you with fangs, claws and coils.

'Oh my, what a delight! It's been so long, so very long, since Davora tasted mortal blood!' the creature cries in a sibilant voice like steel on stone.

It is a lamia, her upper half human(ish), her lower half snake. Her eyes blaze with malice, her hair is an unkempt nest of filth and a foul and oppressive stink washes over you. But those are the least of your problems for Davora the lamia is a terrible vampire...

Will you:

Try to talk your way out of it? ► **97**

Try and dodge aside? ► **312**

582

You place the coins on top of the altar (cross them off!) and mutter a prayer to Aphrodite, the laughter-loving heavenly mistress.

Your offering is rewarded. A small heart-shaped ball of soft, glowing red light appears on the altar. It is a manifestation of Aphrodite's kiss. Simply put it in the palm of your hand and blow a kiss at your intended target. Who knows what might happen after?

Carefully, you put the 'kiss' in your backpack. Note **Aphrodite's kiss** on your Adventure Sheet.

There is nothing more here, so you take your leave.

► 752

583

You shoot one full in the chest, hitting his antique cuirass. The force knocks him off the barge into the river where he sinks into the black waters. Another shot takes one in the head, and he collapses.

‘Surprisingly good,’ says the bargeman. But the *Plunderer* still comes on, and the two remaining spectral pirates prepare to board you. You draw your weapon and get ready to repel boarders.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **482**

Fail ► **407**

584

If you have an **abacus** ► 374

If you don’t have one, or if you don’t want to use it, there is nothing you can do ► 99

585

You assemble a rather clever contraption with a bucket seat for you to sit in and a lever nearby to launch yourself into space. You pull the lever, and fire yourself across the abyssal gulf that is the River of Stars…

‘Aiiiieeeeeeeeee!’ you cry. You hit the ground with bone-jarring force. Tick your Wound box.

If you were already wounded, the fall shatters your skull and you die ► **111**

Otherwise, read on. You pick yourself up, swallow the pain, and resolve never to be that stupid ever again. At least you have made it into Elysium, the Isle of the Blessed ► **479**

586

You are standing at the shores of the frozen, sulphurous Lake Cocytus, the wailing lake. From here you can go:

North to the volcano ► **405**
North-west ► **193**
West to the plains ► **412**
South-east, the Sacred Way ► **72**
South-west, the Sacred Way ► **731**
North-east to the Gate of Tears ► **686**

587

This is where you first found Tantalus, he who was cursed by the gods and who betrayed you. But now that you have freed him, the pool has dried out and the enchanted fruit tree has shrivelled up and died. There is nothing more for you here. You can:

Investigate the statue ► **733**

Go back downriver ► **330**

588

You are walking along the banks of the Acheron, the river of woe. There is a low temple of black rock here. Its carved portico, held up by pillars of black marble inlaid with silver filigree, shows funereal scenes of burial and mourning. It is the Necromanteion, the oracle of the dead, where the ancestors of the ancient dead predict the future. For a fee, of course.

From here, you can go:

Into the oracle ► **130**
North to the bridge ► **821**
South along the river ► **3**
East ► **458**
West ► **273**

589

You are glad to leave the stink of rotting corpses behind you as you move on down the river. You notice some light up ahead, but then another foul stench waft up the tunnel towards you. It gets stronger as you approach, a stink of the sewer. You emerge into the bottom of a latrine… Looking up, you see several holes where people would sit to relieve themselves down into the river below where the excrement would be washed away. Well, most of it at any rate. You look ahead – the river descends into darkness. You look up. You could climb the roughly hewn walls, and up and out through a toilet seat. What choice to do you have? Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **419**
Fail ► **527**

590

You climb up the hill, hands held over your ears, to Salmoneus and his thundering gongs. It is in fact an easy task to dismantle the magic bronze gongs and soon all is mercifully quiet.

Salmoneus stares up at you in amazement. He can't quite believe that the thunder has ceased. Unfortunately for you, your act has indeed offended the gods. Lose all your blessings, if you have any. Meanwhile, Salmoneus gets to his feet.

'You must be one of my worshippers! Finally you realise that I am the true god and it is time to forsake that charlatan, Zeus, am I right?'

'Well, not really...' you begin to say.

'What do you mean? Get down on your knees – now! Whilst I am grateful you freed me, I am still your god, and you will worship me!'

You shake your head. Clearly his endless punishment has driven him mad. Salmoneus, seeing that you are not listening to him, strides to the shoreline and begins commanding the hydras of the bayou to bow down to him, and take him to his throne on Olympus. He keeps screaming like this until suddenly a mass of tentacles writhe up out of the black waters and take him, still shouting commands, down into the depths, never to be seen again. At least his suffering is over....

Hydna refuses to take you to any of the other hills for fear of incurring the disfavour of the gods herself. You could swim to them but you know the bayou is infested with tentacled horrors and how would you get out after without Hydna's barge? Time to say your farewells to Hydna and leave the Black Bayou. ► 796

591

You slice open the slimy cocoon, releasing the people inside. They are from all over the Vulcanverse – a Halizon from Boreas, an Amazon from the eastern plains, a winemaker from Arcadia, and so on. You wonder how the spiders managed to abduct and bring them here from so far away.

'Tunnels,' mutters an Arcadian farmer.

Unfortunately, it is not long before the children of Arachne realise what is happening, and a swarm of spiders head your way. The freed prisoners try to make a run for it. Will you:

Run with them; perhaps together you can break out ► **681**

Stay behind and hide ► **314**

592

After a titanic battle, bathed in the rosy light of a floating bronze butterfly, you are able to defeat Trapjaw. Your final blow slices open his throat and the terrible creature dies in a pool of black blood. You are able to harvest a vial of **daemon's blood**; note it on your Adventure Sheet.

Now ► **290**

593

You leap over the side of the bridge and dive down into the River Styx like a Kingfisher hunting its prey. The water is cold, dark and ever so slightly viscous, making it harder to swim through. On the other hand, you cannot be seen, nor smelt, so you are able to lose your pursuer and make your escape. Legend says that those who are immersed in the Styx are made invulnerable, just like Wolfshadow but when you scratch yourself climbing up the river bank, you know that hasn't worked on you. Perhaps you are not worthy enough…

Anyway, where to now?

North ► **51**
South ► **537**
West ► **228**
South-east to the Slimeswamp ► **38**
Follow the river north-east ► **504**

594

‘Wait, little girl, I am not your mother!’ you say. Her pale face, lined with tears of blood, comes up close to yours.

‘Oh yes, I see now – you are far too ugly to be my mother,’ she whispers.

And then suddenly she is gone in a rush of ragged darkness. You catch your breath and look down. Something compels you to take the silver buckles on the shoes of the murdered girl’s body and sew them onto your own shoes. Moments later, you forget that they are there. Nevertheless, note that you have **silver buckles** on your Adventure Sheet.

You make your way back up to the top of the well. Time to leave this place.

► **412**

595

The battle is hard-fought, but you fend off her attacks with skill. She tries to wrap you up in her serpent coils but you cut off the end of her tail. She shrieks in agony, and in that moment you strike off her head with one quick strike.

Her head falls at your feet, her eyes flick up to look at you – she tries to mutter one final curse, but it dies on her lips along with the malicious light in her eyes. Her serpentine body thrashes and twitches in its death throes before it too, falls quiescent. You have slain Davora the lamia.

► **187**

596

You try to convince them that you are a great sea captain and that that should follow you to great glory and adventure, just like Jason.

‘No one can ever match the great Jason,’ says the swordsman.

‘Anyway, all that is exactly what it is we wish to forget, for what is glory worth, here in the endless grey of Hades?’ says the bowman.

‘No, better to kill you, and destroy the memory of what has been taken from us once and for all,’ says the spearman, advancing.

If you have the title **Kraken Friend** ► 212

If not ► 494

597

He puts down the axe he’s been using to chop wood. ‘Well, that’s honest at least. But if you shirk your tasks you’ll never learn to apply yourself.’

‘Boring.’ You stroll past him into the house to see if supper’s ready.

Mark your STRENGTH score as −1, then ► **459**

598

You have returned to the old lair of Wolfshadow, the undead demon-wolf that hunted you across the world and that you slew with the **golden arrow of Artemis.** A sullen silence has fallen over the glade, and the cave is still empty. None has come to take up residence in this accursed place, not even the birds, although it has been thoroughly looted. Ashes are all that are left.

There is nothing more for you here. Time to move on. ► **228**

599

Quickly you coat your weapon with the **lamia venom**, as they bicker. Cross it off your Adventure Sheet.

But then Tria says, ‘Wait, what if all agreed to share the diadem...’

You’d better act now, time is running out. You strike at the spot where the three heads join the main body. All three of them scream in agony, and turn to bite at you, but then the venom takes hold. They twitch and shudder, before they collapse into a heap before you. Not quite dead, but sleeping it seems. Quickly you hack off one head, and then another. Just as you turn to the third, you notice that the first is beginning to regrow! Desperately, you hack off the third, and thankfully that’s enough to stop it regenerating. You cut off the half-grown head anyway, to be sure, but it seems the loss of all three heads is fatal. You decide to investigate the cave.

► **580**

600

☐☐☐

Put a tick in one of the boxes and then read on.

If one box is now ticked ► **162**

If two boxes are now ticked ► **777**

If three boxes are now ticked ► **703**

601

You are in the tomb of Midas, where you turned the golden maiden and guardian of the tomb, Zoë, back to flesh and blood.

If you wish to make use of the Midas touch ► 567

If not, there is nothing you can do here but leave the tomb and this area ► 76

602

The battle is hard fought, but she is too strong for you. She traps you in the coils of her snake body and sink her fangs into your neck. Venom courses through your veins…. You try to fight back but you sink into unconsciousness in seconds.

► **701**

603

You enter the Chamber of the Furies. It is the heart of the hell within Hades itself, a huge, vast chamber of black granite, lit by ever-burning bonfires seemingly placed at random here and there in the great chamber. Everywhere, the shades of those who were oath-breakers, kin-slayers, and blasphemers in life, and those who committed unspeakable acts of evil suffer the pains of torment in all sorts of ways as decreed by the gods, the fates, the furies or their own guilt. Many are kept in cages, others in fiery pools, some in filthy waters, or narrow shafts sunk into the ground, others carry out the same tasks, over and over again. Many and varied are the torments.

High up in the rooftops, alongside those who are hung up there or left swinging from chains above, are the nests of the Furies themselves who swoop down every now and then to oversee all this agony. They are human like, but with bat like wings, heads more like wolves than humans, yellow-eyed and fanged. They carry brass-studded whips and live only to punish the wicked which they do with angry delight.

This is a truly awful place of agony, of despair and endless suffering. Do mortals really deserve this, you wonder to yourself, no matter what they did in life?

If you have the codeword ***Ostrich*** and do *not* have the codeword ***Quad***

► **149**

Otherwise ► **210**

604

If you have the codeword ***New-Athena***, ► 502. If not, read on.

The old shrine is a carved marble pedestal, with an indentation on the top where something once rested. The carving shows what looks like some kind mechanical owl and a dedication to the goddess Athena. The owl is, of course, the sacred bird of Athena.

If you have a **clockwork owl** ► 572

If not, there is nothing you can do here, so you move on ► 412

605

You both heave and strain, but you cannot break the chain in time. Soon the eagle has gobbled up all the meat Deucalion had, and it soars up into the air and turns its attention to you... Down it swoops cawing savagely.

This eagle is huge, as big as elephant, and it is coming for you. ► 541

606

You gather some of the flowing tears and drink them down…. and you are struck by a sense of overwhelming grief, as if you had lost a son or a daughter. No, many sons and daughters! You sink to your knees, and cry tears of such sorrow you can barely breathe. After a while it fades, and you can function once more but you can still feel a terrible sense of sadness at the core of your soul. You gain the title '**Grief Stricken**'. Add it to your Adventure Sheet. ► **60**

607

You have returned to the painter, Apelles. He is still gazing at the fiery Phlegethon river, whose flaming waters fill the grey skies of Hades with a reddish, luminescent glow. The river banks are too hot and charred for anything to grow there, but further away, a few white poplars grow, their bone-white bark seeming to sparkle with crimson light in the glow from the river of fire. Off to the right, where the Styx meets the Phlegethon, steam roils upward, in ruby-edged clouds of vapour.

'Hello, hello, I've been waiting for you!' says Apelles. 'Have you got my box of paints?'.

If you have a **box of paints** and wish to give them to him ► **55**. If not, read on.

His face falls. 'What are you doing here then? Go and get my paints!' says the shade of Apelles, rather rudely. You consider telling him what he can do with his box of paints, but decide against it. There is nothing to do here for now. Will you head:

North ► **60**
West ► **330**
South-west ► **504**
South to the Phlegethon ► **169**
South-east ► **193**

608

The wind has blown the ashes of Hades up against the great walls of Vulcan City and formed them into fantastical shapes. Will you check the:

- Minotaur’s head mound ► 658
- Dragon-shaped mound ► 549
- Man-shaped mound ► 450
- None of them and leave ► 325

609

‘Oh yes! Our wonderful benefactor, join us, please,’ says Aspasia, speaking with her mouth full and gesturing to a space beside her.

‘I think they want a reward,’ says old man Xenophanes. ‘That’s what they’re like, these adventurer heroes.’

‘Can’t blame ‘em for that, I suppose,’ says Protagoras.

‘Pah, you should be thinking about other matters, young hero. How to better your soul for instance, or how to ensure a happy afterlife,’ says Cleanthes the Stoic.

‘That last bit’s easy enough, make sure you don’t end up stuck with a bunch of other philosophers,’ quips Aristippus.

‘Hah, hah, very droll. Still, maybe the adventurer has a point,’ says Aspasia.

► **526**

610

You are on banks of the river Acheron, near the Necromanteion, the Oracle of the Dead, where the ancestors of the ancient dead predict the future. For a fee of course... From here, you can go:

North to the bridge ► **821**
South along the river ► **3**
East ► **458**
West ► **273**

611

You kill as many as you can in the water, and then run frantically up and down the barge, stamping and hacking as they swarm aboard. The bargeman helps too, and soon you have slaughtered most of the foul, stinking rats and the rest of them flee. Their ripped flesh and guts befoul the decks, together you wash them down and into the sea. However, one rat you thought was particularly bloated had in fact swallowed a **lava gem**. Note it on your Adventure Sheet. Once you've cleaned up, you sail on. ► 364

612

You fail to notice any weaknesses you can exploit or come up with idea you can use. As you were thinking about things, Blubberjaw was waddling towards you, and now he just rushes at you with a ravenous roar, trying to wrap his huge, fat arms around you, blubber hanging off them like obscene fruits. You will be baked alive in that hideous hug, despite your fireproof hide… You have no choice but to fight. Unfortunately, Blubberjaw has got the drop on you.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 10.

Succeed ► **637**

Fail ► **538**

613

You shimmy up the tree and out onto one of its highest branches, and then gracefully leap onto the roof but you land on some already damaged roof tiles, and you crash through into the room below, some kind of storeroom. You collapse in a heap, badly hurt.

You have been wounded; tick the Wound box. If you are already wounded, then the fall finishes you off, and you are killed ► **111**. If you are still alive, read on.

You open the storeroom door, and poke your head out into a corridor. No one to be seen or heard. You venture out to explore the palace – it seems mostly deserted. After all, it isn't a palace of the living with servants, cleaners, courtiers and all the rest, bustling around. It's a palace of the dead.

After a while, you find another storeroom. There are amphorae, barrels and a chest or two largely empty. However, your attention is drawn to a long, thin, rune-inscribed box, just about the right size to contain Agamemnon's staff-like sceptre. ► **392**

614

You hack off the last head, and finally, Polykephales, King of the Hydras is dead. Without any heads, there is no life energy left to regenerate. You heave a sigh of relief – that was a tough battle. Now you can investigate his lair. ► **580**

615

Gain the codeword ***Negate***.

At least she is out of her misery now. Note the **kingslayer dagger** on your Adventure Sheet. It looks like nothing more than an ordinary dagger. The handle is of simple wood, and the blade is stained with blood, but, try as you might, you cannot wash the blood off. It doesn't appear to be of much use in battle, either. Who knows what use it might have? You return to the Mourning Fields.

► **786**

616

Persephone speaks on. ‘I would punish you for what you have done, but I know you helped my mother, Demeter, in the kingdom of Saesara. Because of that, you will be spared my wrath – this time.’

You wake up from your fevered dream in the burned-out garden. ► **416**

617

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 271 immediately; otherwise read on.

The momentary flash of colour in the relentlessly grim and grey plains of Hades came from what looks like a set of glowing runes set into a door of some kind. A stone door, set into the flat earth, like a trapdoor. The runes pique your curiosity so you investigate the trap door. ► 581

618

‘Nice try,’ he says, turning back to the logs he’s chopping. ‘But I think you went swimming instead.’

How? Your hair is wet! Of course.

Mark your INGENUITY score as −1, then ► **459**

619

The eagle is just too big and too quick, its beak fast and deadly and its talons might as well be sword blades. With one swipe of a claw it eviscerates Deucalion who dies in a bloody heap of entrails at your feet. ‘Father, I’m sorry...’ are his last words.

‘No, my son!’ wails poor Prometheus.

And then the eagle bites off your head with one swift strike.

It is over. Although you may well find that the gods will aid you after death, there is no such relief for Deucalion. Or is there? Lose the codeword ***Nibble*** and ► **111**

620

You start to sing a song. They stare at you in astonishment but then Georgios says, ‘Right, well, if you’re going to sing, we’ll just kill you right now.’

‘No, wait,’ says the other, ‘It’s so miserable here in Hades, I’d love to hear a song. We can do the killing after.’

‘Well… OK then, sing on, soon-to-be robbed one!’

Make a CHARM roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► **252**

Fail ► **315**

621

You have solved the combination lock puzzle on the big bronze chest.

Six – if it doubles every year, half its height must be in the penultimate year.

Two – half its own weight must be equal to one, therefore the answer is two.

One – the shepherd left with one head of sheep and his own head on his shoulders.

You open the big bronze chest. Inside you find a **clockwork owl**, a magnetic **lodestone,** 18 pyr coins, and a blueprint of some kind.

Gain the codeword ***Neural*** and ► 272

622

The stairs lead to a long corridor of dressed stone. Lanterns hang from the ceiling along the way and the walls are hung with tapestries depicting great events.

Suddenly you start back in shock – the tapestries are moving! Figures enact great deeds, over and over again, running, fighting, dancing, loving... Scenes from the siege of Troy, of the gods in battle with the titans, of Theseus and the minotaur, Leonidas and the Three Hundred at Thermopylae, of the war between Sparta and Athens, of heroes and villains, gods and monsters, and so on. Who could have woven such things?

You wander down the corridor, until at the end you come to an archway, over which the words ‘Chamber of the Fates’ has been carved.

‘Enter, mortal, we have been expecting you...’ says a haunting, ethereal voice from within the chamber…

► **151**

623

You try to cut your bonds on the axe that hangs from Daisy’s left flank but Death Dealer notices what you are up to. ‘We’ll have none of that!’ he says, and he clubs you into unconsciousness again.

You wake to find him dragging you towards a great archway, somewhere deep underground. It has these words engraved into it:

EREBUS
THE HALLS OF NIGHT

He drags you through the arch and you are plunged into the blackest night. ‘Death comes to all, beggar or king, or so it should be,’ says Death Dealer, as he throws you to the ground and leaves.

► **832**

624

You slice at one the heads, but it rears back out of the way. Another head bits in from the side, aiming right at your neck.

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **411**

Fail ► **386**

625

Write the number **100** in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet (in place of the number already written there, if any) and then ► 772

626

Once you are far from the river of fire and the stink of Blubberjaw's corpse, the three women collapse in a heap.

'We must rest for a while, but thank you for this, I will not forget it,' says Lampeto in a dark, funereal voice. 'These are my friends, Penthé the… umm… Poisoner, and Morissia the… well… Manslayer.'

'I think I can guess why they were condemned alongside you…' you comment.

The two shades give you a wry smile but their eyes are hollow and dark with pain.

'Either way, we have long been punished for our crimes, many times over. We suffered far greater agonies than anything we inflicted when we lived!' says Lampeto with bitter anger.

You put your hands up in a placatory gesture. 'Yes, I know, the gods are cruel. Such a fate, like that of Prometheus, seems far worse than the crime, but you are free now.'

'Yes, and one day I will repay you. But for now, we must find a place to rest and rebuild our strength.'

'Where will you go?' you ask.

'Elysium is closed to the likes of us but I think we can find a place in the Asphodel Meadows if we keep our heads down and remain unnoticed. Come and find me there, and we will talk more.'

You leave them to rest, and take your leave. Lampeto seems deep in thought but Penthé and Morissia stare at you relentlessly as you walk away, their eyes hooded and dark. Who knows what is going through their minds after such torments?

Where will you go?

North ► **711**

West to the confluence of the Styx and the Phlegethon ► **504**

East ► **193**

South to the swamps ► **38**

627

Write the number **754** in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet (in place of the number already written there, if any) and then ► **568**

628

‘What need do we…’ says Ena, ‘have for gifts…’ says Dio, ‘when we can just take what we want?’ finishes Tria.

► **554**

629

If you have the codeword ***Nought*** or ***Nefarious*** ► **587** immediately. If not, read on.

You approach the pool. The water is as clear as any water you've ever seen, fresh and sweet to drink, and the tree flourishes as if it were growing in the Gardens of Arcadia. Apples, pears and oranges hang off the tree – even in Arcadia that would impossible! They smell and look delicious. The man turns to face you. He is emaciated, a wretched starveling, but his eyes are bright and his nose hooked and aristocratic. You fill your waterskin with the pure fresh water. He stares at you enviously.

'See that rock over there?' he says in a dry, croaky voice, pointing to the statue. 'That's my daughter Niobe. The gods, they are cruel, so cruel. My daughter had twelve children and boasted that she had more than the gods themselves. And they punished her for that, that tiny bit of hubris. Apollo shot dead every boy with his bow and Artemis all her girls. The misery and horror of it turned her to stone, and even now, she weeps tears of grief and will do, for all eternity. I hate the gods.'

'And what of you?' you ask.

► **654**

630

‘Hah, hah, wrong, fool!’ mocks the silver minotaur face. ‘The doors shall remain shut!’

‘Don’t we get another chance?’ you ask.

‘No, of course not, that’s it!’ replies the face.

Well, what now then?’ asks Deucalion.

‘You slowly die of thirst I guess,’ says the face. ‘Goodbye!’ With that the silver minotaur closes his eyes and appears to go back to sleep.

You and Deucalion exchange a despairing glance. But then you have an idea. ‘Perhaps I can talk our way out of this,’ you say. If you have the codewords ***Namesake*** or ***Nihilism*** (or both) ► **710** immediately. If not, read on.

Make a CHARM roll at difficulty 9.

Succeed ► **123**

Fail ► **689**

631

You find yourself back in the tomb of Icarus.

You wonder whether you could use the **wings of Icarus** to fly, but you don’t have the special wax needed to attach them to your back. You will have to find a way to make that wax…

Anyway, there is nothing left for you to do here, so you leave the crypt and head back to the plains of Hades.

► **193**

632

‘Out of my way, worm-food!’ you bluster, ‘Can’t you see my heart still beats and that the blood runs hot in my veins! The King himself has summoned me, for he needs me for an important mission into the lands of the living!’

‘But, but, our orders…’

‘What do you think he will do when he finds out why I did not answer his call?’ you bellow angrily and the guard seems to crumple in on himself in front of your eyes.

‘Forgive me,’ says the chastened shade, pulling back his spear. You hurry past before he changes his mind.

The interior of the palace seems mostly deserted. After all, it isn’t a palace of the living with servants, cleaners, courtiers and all the rest, bustling around. It’s a palace of the dead.

After a while, you find another storeroom. There are amphorae, barrels and a chest or two largely empty. However, your attention is drawn to a long, thin, rune-inscribed box, just about the right size to contain Agamemnon’s staff-like sceptre.

► 392

633

You try to hold her off long enough to make a break for it down the entrance tunnel but you fail to dodge a hammering blow from one of her fists and it shatters your skull, spraying your brains over the mural depicting King Midas turning a garden of roses into gold. Death is instant. Perhaps the gods will forgive your stupidity and bring you back.

► **111**

634

You give Perdix the **adamantine whetstone** (cross it off your Adventure Sheet) and the Nemean lion's talons. He nods in satisfaction and disappears into his workshop. Some hours later and after a lot banging, hammering, and swearing, he re-emerges, holding a pair of iron knuckle dusters ending in the savagely sharp talons of the Nemean lion.

Note the **Nemean bagh nakh (STRENGTH +3)** on your Adventure Sheet. It supersedes the **hardwood club** and the **iron spear**. It is also the most deadly weapon in the world, so you gain + 1 Glory for wielding it.

'Tell everyone I made it,' says Perdix, proudly.

You nod and thank him before taking your leave. You return to the Asphodel Meadows ► 75

635

You give them an epic recital of the deeds of the *Argo* and its crew. As you've read the journal, you are able to work out who they are, and mention them by name. You big up their deeds. They are transfixed by your story, and listen raptly.

When you have finished, they clap.

'Perhaps forgetting is not the way,' says one.

'Yes, we were glorious, weren't we!' says another. At least it looks like they're not interested in a fight anymore, but all of that is suddenly rendered immaterial….

If you have the title **Kraken Friend** ► 274

If not ► 545

636

‘None who are living may enter the throne room of Hades, save for the most glorious heroes. And so, you may enter, mortal,’ says a sepulchral voice as if from nowhere. The great golden doors swing open soundlessly and you step in. ► **101**

637

You fight with great skill, cutting great gobbets of fat off the obscene mass that is Blubberjaw, but it is also a burning mass of flames and despite your fireproof hide, you get badly scorched.

Tick the Wound box on your Adventure Sheet. If you are already wounded, then this is the end – Blubberjaw will cook and eat you. Pray the gods take pity on you and ► **111**

If you still live ► **247**

638

If you have the codeword ***New-Ares*** ► 423 immediately. If not, read on.

If you have the title, **Accursed of Ares** ► 746 immediately. If not, read on.

You have come to an old battlefield. Bodies litter the ground, along with various items of broken arms and armour. It looks like some kind of battle between red shields and black shields. In the middle, you see an altar. As you draw closer your realise it was once a shrine dedicated to Ares, the god of war, the man-slaughterer, insatiable in battle. If you have a **statuette of Ares** and wish to re-consecrate this shrine ► 544

If not, ► 117

639

If you have the codeword ***Naughty*** ► 517 immediately. If not, read on.

If you have the codeword ***Nadir*** ► 15 immediately. If not, read on.

You have come to a great lake but it is a lake of ice, and strangely yellowed. It also stinks of rotten eggs. There must be quite a bit of sulphur trapped in the frozen waters. Scattered about on its surface are heaped up piles of ice and rock. There is also a strange sound in the air, as ice floes and bergs grind up against each other on the lake and it sounds like the wailing and keening of mourners at a funeral. This must be the Cocytus, the river of wailing, where it has come up from Tartarus, and pooled into this frozen lake.

It is cold here, very cold, and the sky is iron grey. Flurries of freezing ash blow into your face. Suddenly you hear a cry, out on the ice. Someone is in trouble, and calling for aid. You'd best take a look.

► 195

640

You approach the Garden of Persephone. It is enclosed in tall walls of what appear to be pale bone. They are slick to the touch and unscalable. A great portal of white marble, inlaid with a filigree of some kind of green mineral is the only way in. A frieze of dryads, naiads, centaurs and satyrs frolicking in an Arcadian paradise adorn the portico. The door is of iron, studded with verdigrised copper plates, etched with symbols of magic and warding. It is locked, but there is a keyhole. If you have **Persephone's key** ► 757

If not, short of lobbing yourself over the walls with a catapult, there is no way you can get inside. ► 728

641

You feel your will, your very soul, falling under the power of Nyx, she who is the night. You have become a child of night, a mindless minion of Nyx, mother of titans. You will serve her in the upcoming war between the titans, the Olympians, and mankind. Indeed, with you as her slave, the victory of the titans is almost assured. Your adventure ends here, for the gods cannot help as you are not dead, just the mindless minion of another. ► 750

642

Inspired by Apollo, your words are kind, measured and sensitive. She stops crying and listens to you. When you have made your case she says, ‘Perhaps so, but I cannot forget. I can never forget.’ With that she goes back to rocking back and forth, staring hopelessly at the doll. She chokes out a despairing sob and reaches for the hat pin...

If you have some **Lethe water**, and wish to offer her a draft of the waters of forgetfulness ► **270**

If not, or you do not wish too, then there is nothing more you can do here. At least you tried, you tell yourself as you take your leave. ► **172**

643

You heft up the body over one shoulder – instantly the nearby mangrave trees emit a piercing shriek that deafens you. Moments later the trees begin to shudder and shake, and you can just about hear over the ringing in your ears an ominous hissing sound.

Amidst the branches of the trees, appear several enormous spiders, leaping from branch to branch. More splay-footed spiders scuttle across the surface of the swamp like giant water striders.

And then the body on your shoulder vomits up fetid, stinking swamp water all down your front. The spiders are closing in. Perhaps if you put the man back into the water, they will back off, or maybe you can carry him out if you run for it.

Drop him ► 751

Try and get him out ► 197

644

You make your way around the slopes of the volcano of death. Piles of ash and twisted rocks of solidified magma are scattered about everywhere. Lost shades wander its slopes in bemused confusion, hopelessly searching for that which they have lost and can never find. After a while, you find a cave entrance, under the lee of an outcropping of igneous rock that looks like a set of outspread wings.

‘The wings of death,’ mutters a passing shade, bent-backed and shambling. ‘For that is the entrance to Erebus, home of the sons of Nyx’. Will you:

Leave the slopes ► **410**

Descend into the darkness ► **670**

645

After a terrible battle, you slay Mormo with a thrust through the heart. ‘Oh my sister, soon we will be together again...’ she gasps as she dies at your feet. Gain the codeword ***Neutralised***.

On her body you find 75 pyr and a bottle labelled **Dione’s blood**. You are also able to extract a vial of **lamia venom**. Note them on your Adventure Sheet. After you’ve disposed of her body, you leave your house and return to the City of the Dead.

► **10**

646

□

Put a tick in a box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 293 immediately. If not, read on.

You do not have to search for long because one of Lampeto's minions, Penthé (the Poisoner) comes running up to you.

'We've been waiting for you, come this way,' she says. You follow her to a simple wooden hut at the edge of one of the many pale-blossomed meadows. Inside are Lampeto and her other retainer, Morissia (the Manslayer).

'Ah, my hero!' says Lampeto, somewhat sarcastically. 'Thank you again for rescuing us, but I can only give you what you truly deserve as a reward if I can get out of Hades back to the mountains of Boreas. Will you help me?

'I know of only one sure way out for a shade, and that is the silver seal of Hades,' you say.

'I have heard of that too, but it only gives passage to one shade, so unless you can get three of them…'

'Highly unlikely I'm afraid.'

'There must be another way out for the dead, surely?' asks Lampeto.

'After all, you can come and go as you please.' says Penthé.

'Surely you could smuggle us out with you somehow?' says Morissia.

'Actually, there may be a way, yes,' you say.

► 35

647

Gain the codeword ***Nihilism.***

You lay down the **Summer Palace picnic hamper** (cross it off), full of the delicious food and drink of Arcadia on the brightly coloured rug. You lift the lid and lay out a jug of pomegranate wine, venison pies, flatbreads, honeyed almond tarts, fruits from the woodlands of Ambrosia, and much more. For a moment, the philosophers stare at the spread in amazed stupefaction.

Then Aristippus the hedonist Cyrenaic, grabs the wine jug and a pie, and starts stuffing his face.

'It would appear my proposition is true,' mutters Protagoras. 'Somehow.'

'Bah, it was the waiting we needed, not this surfeit of pleasure that will cloud our minds. What chance we had to better ourselves has been ruined!' says the stoic, Cleanthes.

'Nevertheless, this is clear evidence in favour of the hypothesis, and we cannot ignore it!' says the old man Xenophanes.

'Well then,' says Aspasia, 'I declare the proposition that all things come to those who wait to be true, and thank the gods for that.' She tucks into the amazing spread, as do the others, slurping and chomping with abandon. You can hardly blame them for that – who knows how long they've been dead here, arguing the toss over this and that. But you can blame them for ignoring you.

'Hey, I'm here too you know.'

► **609**

648

Get the codeword ***Neveragain*** and lose the codewords ***Neverending*** and ***Projectile***.

You wait until the last moment, just as the demon-wolf is leaping for your throat and drop back with the arrow held up in front of you, allowing Wolfshadow to fall upon it with all of his weight and force. It is driven straight into its black, undead heart. With one final whimper, the daemon-wolf collapses, dead in an instant…. You can hardly believe it. Cross the **golden arrow of Artemis** off your Adventure Sheet, its purpose done, it has dissipated into nothingness.

After you've burned the hideous, flayed body of the undead wolf, just to be sure, you investigate the cave.

It is a grisly sight. There is blood everywhere with numerous dismembered bodies scattered around, gnawed bones, half eaten heads, a den of utter horror. But you are a hardened adventurer – nothing stands between you and your loot! You find amidst the ruined, twisted flesh of his victims, 150 pyr, one **lava gem**, some **honey of Hades** (made in the gardens of Persephone, removes 1 wound, cross it off after use) and the **Helm of the Lost Hero**. This ancient helmet is rusted and cracked, and is of no use on its own, but may be useful later. Better hold on to it or put it into storage somewhere.

For your heroic deed, you also get +1 Glory.

Now ► **367**

649

You have returned to the *Shadow on the Waters*. The bargeman greets you.

‘Welcome, living one,’ he croaks. You step aboard.

‘Since last we met, I have heard of some of your exploits. I’ll take you upriver for free, as long as you tell me some tales that I can re-tell to my customers. Deal?’

You nod. The bargeman grins. ‘Excellent!’ he says. ‘Let’s go. Another journey on the River of Woe -what could possibly go wrong?’

You are sailing up the Acheron, the River of Woe. Roll two dice:

score 2-5: the kraken wakes! ► **484**

score 6-8: corpse rat swarm ► **378**

score 9-12: stirrings in the deep ► **578**

650

Prometheus rubs at his wrists where the chains bit deep. He looks around for a moment as if he can't quite believe he is really free before approaching Deucalion.

'Thank you, son,' he says, as he kneels down and puts one massive hand on Deucalion's shoulder. 'Your mother's plan worked, then?'

'Yes, father, she hid me from the wrath of Zeus by turning me back into a babe. The Furies still found us though, and she had to set me loose on the river.'

'But you still managed to make it down here and free me? A true hero!'

'Umm... not without the help of the real hero of all of this, father!' and he gestures sheepishly at you.

'What, this two-pyr adventurer? Really? I thought they were your servant!'

'No, father, if this adventurer hadn't found me on the river, nurtured me to manhood, solved all the riddles set by the guardians, and indeed actually freed you, none of this would have happened.'

'Bah,' barks the gargantuan titan, 'I suppose you're right, but it's just that helping out humans is what got me into trouble in the first place, so I'm not very happy with them at the moment.'

'But you created the first human out of clay.'

'Yes, and nor am I the first immortal to regret that. Anyway. We are where we are, and you are right, Deucalion, I should be grateful.'

Lose the codeword ***Nibble*** and ► **6**

651

Mormo isn’t going to be able to fulfil that vow, given that you’ve killed her already. You allow yourself a brief, self-congratulatory smile but there is nothing more you can do here, so you head back out into the unending shadow that is Hades. ► **121**

652

To see what you find, roll a die.

score 1-2: some **copper ore**

score 3-4: a **box of paints**

score 5-6: a **brazen trumpet**

Note anything you find as a possession on your Adventure Sheet. When you are done, will you:

Climb to the top ► **789**

Explore the mountainside ► **644**

Leave the volcano ► **410**

653

The bubble of river water bursts and propels a handful of shellfish up into the air and down onto the barge deck where one of them cracks open, spilling its contents at your feet, something round and shiny.

‘A priceless pearl!’ says the bargeman.

You reach down but it turns out to be a coin. A single pyr. Note it on your Adventure Sheet if you can be bothered. ‘Hah, the gods mock you,’ says the bargeman with a ghostly chuckle.

Where to now?

Disembark and east ► **51**
Disembark and South-west ► **228**
Disembark and North-west ► **273**
Continue upriver by barge ► **364**

654

‘I am Tantalus, once the king of a great city, father of ill-fated Niobe, now an accursed wretch, punished by the gods with eternal hunger that can never be satiated.’ He reaches for a fruit – the branch pulls away. He bends to drink, the waters magically flow away from him. ‘See? I can smell it, see it, but I can never touch it. So near, yet so far. Oh, how I have longed for the sweet release of death, but the gods have cursed me with immortality, even as I starve.’

He looks up at you hopefully. ‘You are a living mortal, aren’t you? All I’ve ever seen up here is the occasional lost shade, wandering aimlessly, powerless. But you, you could actually help me. I cannot leave but there is nothing to stop you from dragging me out here. After all, the gods never imagined a living person would ever find me, here in Hades.’

‘But if I free you, won’t the gods punish me too?’

‘Bah, no, what could they do, dream nasty dreams about you? But if it worries you, I will reward you! Free me and I will lead you to the Kyon Khryseos, the golden dog. Built by Vulcan himself, a living dog of gold – makes for a great guard dog!’ Will you:

Fetch him out ► **513**

Leave him to his fate ► **488**

655

Whilst he cannot see, you take the chance to shove the **lamia venom** into the great snapping jaws at his chest.

You hear a gratifying crunch as the jaws close around the vial, releasing the venom and then….

Trapjaw begins to convulse and shudder, writhing in agony. He in his death throes and in a matter of seconds, he is dead.

Cross off the **lamia venom**. However, you can now harvest a vial of Trapjaw's blood. Add some **daemon's blood** to your Adventure Sheet and

► 290

656

The baths where Klytemnestra dwelled and suffered, cursed as she was by the gods, are dried up and gone. There is nothing here but thorns, weeds and rubble. Somewhere in the gloom filled underworld Klytemnestra, once a princess of Sparta, a queen of Lydia and of Mycenae, sister to Helen of Troy, wanders alone, forgetting and forgotten, but at least she has found some peace. You return to the Mourning Fields.

► **786**

657

You have come to the bridge over the Acheron river. It is well travelled. Roll a die to see if you find anything that has been dropped or mislaid.

score 1-2: ox dung (yuk)
score 3-4: a **maggoty pie**
score 5-6: 1 pyr
When you are ready to move on ► **301**

658

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **41** immediately. If not, read on.

You sweep away the ashes of what you thought might be the head of a minotaur. Turns out it’s a small wine amphora with horn like handles. Opening the lid you see it’s full of **vinegar of hades** inside. All wine in Hades turns into vinegar. Note the **vinegar of hades** on your Adventure Sheet.

► **608**

659

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 321 immediately. If not, read on.

You step over the outer edge of the garden, marked by a ring of short rune covered posts, when suddenly all hell is let loose. The brambles, weeds and thorns seem to rise up, reaching for you. You dodge aside, but nearby a knot of these plants begin to coalesce, writhing and twisting up together, drawing in more and more weeds, shrubs and roots to form a huge monstrous beast of thorns and brambles.

It seems the garden has the power to protect itself from unwanted intruders. Evidently, you are unwanted.

Will you:

Hack your way through ► 399

Set fire to the garden ► 455

660

Is this the house of a gorgon, you wonder, or some other creature that can turn men to stone? As quiet as you can, you sneak your way through the front door, eyes cast down wherever possible.

Inside you see the statue of an Amazon warrior woman on her knees hands thrown over her face in horror, but to no avail. She is as stone.

Carefully you move from room to room – you realise that whoever lives here is not at home, you can relax. One ear cocked for sounds from outside, you look around but it appears to have been stripped of most of its fittings and furniture.

If this box ☐ is empty you find a slightly stale **honey cake** and a jar of **vinegar of Hades**, and under the table, carelessly dropped it seems, a magnetic **lodestone**. Tick the box if you decide to keep these items.

You also find a letter on a table, addressed to someone called ‘Stheno’. It reads:

‘My dear sister,

I’ve moved to the desert. I’ve had enough of Hades. It’s quiet here, true, but the wine is awful, it turns to vinegar so fast. Come and see me in Notus, I’ve heard their grapes are best.

Yours, Medusa’

At least you’re safe here it seems for the gorgon is gone. There is nothing more to be done so what now?

Investigate the mausoleum ► **4**

Leave the area ► **76**

661

You make your way through the web-infested, but thankfully spider-free tunnel back to the temple of Arachne, deep in the Slimeswamp in Hades. It is a fetid morass of steaming muck and foul, brackish water. Corpses lie just below the surface, preserved despite the filthy waters by the roots of the mangrave trees that grow out of the slime – half corpse, half tree, twisted faces leering at you out of gnarled, black-barked trunks. Their branches stretch out, and on the end of them, foul egg like seeds are ready to drop onto the drowned corpses.

This is still a poisonous dangerous place, but the spiders are relatively easily avoided since you slew their high priestess and leader, Syna, some time ago. To go back through the tunnel to Arcadia ► **250** in *The Wild Woods*. If not, will you go:

North-west to the Styx ► **145**
West ► **537**
East ► **412**
South to the Sacred Way ► **731**

662

Up ahead you spy another barge heading downriver towards you. You glance at the spectral bargeman but he seems unconcerned. It too is mostly black with silver edgings and is called the *Black Barter*. The other bargeman is much like your own – spectral, ghostly and ancient.

They greet each other with a silent nod. Your bargeman gestures at you. The other shrugs. 'Worth a try,' I suppose,' he mutters. and they lash their two barges together. He opens up a large hatch on the side of his main cabin to reveal an emporium of goods. It is a floating shop!

You can buy and sell at the following prices:

	To buy	*To sell*
blessed soil of Arcadia	200 pyr	–
fresh fish	20 pyr	15 pyr
lava gem	90 pyr	60 pyr
recurve bow	80 pyr	40 pyr
laurel wreath	80 pyr	50 pyr
strix stew	25 pyr	20 pyr
vinegar of Hades	20 pyr	15 pyr
honey cake	–	50 pyr
pomegranate wine	–	35 pyr

When you've completed your business at the river market ► **294**

663

The strixes give up the chase after a minute or two and fly back to their tower. You are able to leave this place unhurt. ► 564

664

You sneak around the edge of the temple plaza, hugging the shadows. As you draw near to the temple of Arachne you see several spiders hanging from a web across the eaves of the portico. Guards.

Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **490**

Fail ► **98**

665

The key fits perfectly into the massive lock on the bronze chest. It flips open with a loud click. Inside you find the **Golden Fleece**, a great, gold-infused sheet of heavy ram's wool. It is a legendary artifact indeed! You also find the princely sum of 200 pyr and one application of **Iaso's balm** (Iaso is the goddess of recuperation – each application will remove 1 scar). Note them on your Adventure Sheet. Who knows what use the fleece may have in the future?

There is nothing more you can do here, so you head back to the delta. Gain the codeword ***Navarine*** and ► **493**

666

None can walk the land of the dead as a shade without feeling its mark – gain a scar. ‘Where do you wish to return to, mortal?’ whispers a voice in your head.

The underworld of Hades ► **500** in this book
The deserts of Notus ► **500** in *The Hammer of the Sun*
The fields of Arcadia ► **500** in *The Wild Woods*
The peaks of Boreas ► **500** in *The Pillars of the Sky*

667

You take the book from his hands and flip through it, feeling like a watcher of the night skies when a new planet soars into view.

As your uncle meets your look of wild surmise his thoughtful, often-serious face crinkles into a broad smile. ‘Yes, you see it. She is the true goddess of beauty, the beauty of understanding that is seen with the mind rather than the eye.’

Note on your Adventure Sheet that your god is Athena, then ► 769

668

You have a good head-start and, with a hefty dose of luck from the Fates, are able to lose them amidst the forest of stalagmites in the great cavern of rivers. You flee all the way up to the surface. ► 8

669

You pull the lever and find yourself hurtling up into the air like one of Zeus' thunderbolts. You hurtle up and up – is this the end? Above you, a hole in sky spreads open, showing stars and the night sky. Stars in Hades? How? And then suddenly you are plunging down to earth again. You come to a juddering halt, inches off the ground and then drop safely to find yourself at the gates in-between Hades and the Desert of Notus. Alive... ► **686**

670

□

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 42 immediately. If not, read on.

This cave is the entrance to the abyssal hells of Tartarus and Erebus, the land of primordial darkness. Tartarus is where the titans were imprisoned and also where evil souls are punished for their crimes against the gods.

The entry way is a simple enough cave, but a slab of black marble inscribed with words in white alabaster takes up one wall. It says:

'ONLY THE LOST, THE STUPID, THE DERANGED AND THE UNHINGED, THE GUILTY AND THOSE WHOSE SOULS ARE STAINED WITH THE BLOOD OF INNOCENTS ENTER HERE FOR THIS IS THE HEART OF HELL. WHICH ARE YOU?'

Further on, another marble plaque on the wall reads:

'WELCOME, FOOL, TO TARTARUS, HOME TO THE TITANS, NIGHT-SHROUDED NYX, AND HER CONSORT, EREBUS, HE WHO IS DARKNESS, AND THEIR DREAD SONS, THANATOS, WHOSE TOUCH IS DEATH, AND HYPNOS WHOSE BREATH IS SLEEP.'

As you finish reading, you see a figure crawling out of the darkness, towards the light. It appears to be a lone shade, broken, exhausted, desperately dragging herself along. She looks up at you.

'Help me...' she cries. And then out of the winged shadows, wolf headed and yellow of eye, rushes forward and grabs the shade with iron-cold talons before you can do anything.

'Nooooo...' wails the shade, as she is dragged back down into a never ending night of eternal torment. Or is that itself her torment – to forever reach for the light, yet to be snatched back at the last moment?

Will you:

Continue into the dark ► 429

Maybe come back later ► 8

671

You have reconsecrated this shrine already. You hum a paean in praise of silver-tongued Apollo, as you approach, just to be sure. If you are a worshipper of Apollo, blessings are free. If not, you must pay 10 pyr per blessing. You can have a total of three blessings at a time. Each blessing can be used to roll again when you fail an attribute check (CHARM, GRACE, INGENUITY or STRENGTH) but only once in any given situation – so if you fail the re-roll, you can't spend another blessing to try again. When you have finished here ► **493**

672

You duck forward, under one of the hydra's striking heads, and hack up at it, as it pulls back. Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► **196**

Fail ► **256**

673

You have arrived in a far corner of the underworld, a lost, forgotten corner for there is only a cold wind that chills your heart as well as your bones, an ancient grave yard and a long abandoned temple to Hades. This is also where the winged chariot is stored, behind the old temple. From here you can go:

North to the mountains ► **226**
East ► **521**
West to the Sacred Way ► **474**
South ► **117**
To another quadrant, using the chariot ► **497**

674

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 67 immediately; otherwise read on.

As you step up to the bridge, you hear voices echoing up from underneath it.

‘You said it would be easy pickings, here in Hades!’

‘I thought it would be! People who are already dead should be easy to rob, right?’

‘Yeah, but the shades of the dead don’t exactly carry much cash, do they, you idiot!’

‘Should have said something earlier then, we’re stuck here now, can’t afford to... wait… what was that? Yeah – it’s a live one, let’s go!’

Two raggedy figures climb up on the other side of the bridge. They are dressed in tattered leathers, one has a spear, the other a bow with a nocked arrow. They look a little worse for wear, hungry, dirty. Slim pickings in Hades, no doubt.

If your Glory is 5 or more ► 43

If not ► 185

675

‘What are you... No!’ she shrieks as you grab her satchel and flute and leave her to her fate.

‘You pox-ridden pig! You thieving, backstabbing hyena! You honourless insect, you worm-eating, bile-sucking, self-serving, traitorous, dung-brained, spawn of arse!’

She keeps up this stream of invective until she finally loses her grip and with a final cry of despair she sinks into the cold, dark yellow waters of the lake and is gone.

You look through her backpack. You find a surprising amount of money, 100 pyr, also a pouch of black velvet filled with coins – rare **gold obols** – some **fresh fish,** a **brazen trumpet** and an **ivory flute**. Note them on your Adventure Sheet. Gain the codeword ***Nadir*** and ► **586**

676

‘Look, ‘tis the siren of the Styx!’ says the bargeman. Up ahead, on the shore, you can just about make out a womanly figure, a lyre in hand. ‘Quick!’ says the bargeman. ‘Plug your ears!’

The song of the siren is said to be so beautiful that any who heard it would become their slave. You think of the tale of Odysseus who so wanted to hear their song he had his men tie him to the mast. He did indeed fall under their spell but was unable to go to them, and when they passed, he recovered fully. He was perhaps the only mortal to hear the song of the siren and survive. Will you:

Plug your ears ► **778**

Have the bargeman lash you to the prow so you can hear the song of the siren ► **184**

677

You explain that you the **iron key** open a hatch into a tunnel in the far north of Hades that runs under the great walls of Vulcan City and into the workshop of the gods. From there, she and her companions could find their way to the mountains of Boreas.

‘Yes, agreed!’ says Lampeto. ‘Let’s go!’ You lead them north. ► 460

678

You leave her tomb lair and find yourself in the Mourning Fields, one of the quarters of the City of the Dead. Her lair was virtually round the corner from your own house! You look around. The Mourning Fields is a place for those who cannot break the bonds of grief and sorrow, even in death. Here, the Houses of the Dead are laid out in a grid, like a cemetery in the world of the living but much of it is in a crumbling state of decay. The inhabitants do not care about their surroundings, no offerings are left at the shrines, the walkways are pitted and overgrown with the thorny, black brambles of Hades, or overshadowed by the skeletal branches of bone-white Poplar trees. Doors hang on hinges, roofs have collapsed.

Everywhere there is an all-pervading sense of sorrow and despair, and wherever you go, you cannot escape the sound of sobbing or the keening wails of grief and misery that pierce the gloom like needles of anguish. This is an awful place.

Nearby, you see moss-green hand prints on the portal of a tomb. From within, sobbing can be heard. Opposite the tomb is a crumbling building with a faded sign that says, ‘The Baths of Klytemnestra.’ Further on, the road descends deeper into the Fields.

Investigate the handprints ► 152
Visit the baths ► 182
Explore further ► 26
Leave the Fields ► 10

679

You’re heading home. The shadows are long and cool after the heat of the day. As you come through the gate, your father sees you across the yard. ‘Did you do your chores?’

What do reply?

‘Yes’ ► **618**

‘No’ ► **597**

680

You sit next to Anchises at the bar. ‘I once loved a goddess,’ he mumbles, ‘and she loved me!’

‘And does Aphrodite still love you?’ you ask. He looks away as if he’d rather not answer. Instead he says, ‘She loves our son, the great Aeneas. He founded some city off in the west. What’s it called now? Rom? Ram? I forget.’

‘Do you ever hear from the goddess?’ you ask.

Anchises sighs. He shakes his head. ‘She has abandoned me.’

‘Is it true that Zeus made her love you?’

He starts to sob into his drink. ‘Yes, it’s true. It was a false, forced love. But I love her still, how could I not? She is the goddess of love and so I am cursed to be heartbroken forever.’

‘Did she leave you a token of your time together at least?’

He looks up. ‘Well, yes, I have this,’ says Anchises, and he fetches out a small, beautifully carved wooden box, inlaid with scenes of love and marriage. He opens it. Inside is a little heart-shaped ball of light, glowing softly. ‘It is the kiss of the goddess made real,’ he says.

‘What does it do?’ you ask.

‘Who knows?’

‘Interesting. What do you want for it?’

‘Want? All I want is to forget, why do you think I drink like this?’

If you have **Lethe water** and offer him some ► **807**

If not, there is nothing more you can do here ► **465**

681

You rush together through the swamps but the Children of Arachne are simply too numerous. They are getting picked off one by one and killed. Perhaps you can get away in the chaos.

Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **546**

Fail ► **830**

682

You take a seat. Davides starts up a conversation.

‘So what do you do?’ he asks.

‘I’m… well, it’s a bit difficult to pin down really, it’s not a regular job as such. I guess an adventurer? A hero. That sort of thing,’ you reply.

Davides starts on your nails. ‘What does that involve?’ he asks absent mindedly.

You blink, uncertain how to answer. ‘Killing,’ you mutter. ‘There’s a lot of killing, fighting and stabbing and stuff.’

‘Ah, hence all the blood, nicks, cuts and scars,’ he says.

‘Yeah. And puzzles too. Lots of annoying puzzles.’

‘So, you’re like one of those guys – you know, Herakles, Jason or Odysseus. That sort of thing.’

‘I guess so, yes,’ you say. And so the conversation goes.

Davides cleans you up nicely, manicures your nails perfectly and gives you a great haircut. You admire yourself in the polished bronze mirror on the wall, and the one he holds up behind your head. Note that you have a **nice haircut** on your Adventure Sheet. (You can only ever have one **nice haircut** at a time, so if you’ve already got one do not add another). You can add 1 to your next CHARM roll, but only the next one. After that, your haircut will have been mussed up, cross it off. You take your leave and head back to the meadows.

► 75

683

‘Ah, Wolfshadow, He who Howls in Darkness. He is a son of Cerberus, the hound of Hades but before he was even named, he fell into the River Styx and drowned as a pup. But the hound begged his master for aid, and Hades returned him to life – well, of a sort, for he is what some call undead, a shadow of what he was in life, hence the name. His dead heart is filled with bloodlust, greed and rage – they say that those who hear his howl are doomed. And rightly so, for having drowned in the river Styx, Wolfshadow is invulnerable. Though some say there is a way to defeat him.’

‘And what is that?’ you ask.

‘Well now, that’s another question and requires another payment,’ says Tiresias with a sly smile. ‘The fee is 10 pyr.’

Pay again ► **558**

Go back ► **198**

684

You take aim, let fly – and miss. Blubberjaw batters you across the head with one great, bloated arm.

Tick your Wound box. If you were already wounded then the blow is fatal, and your skull bursts open and you die. But surely the gods will not forsake you after your valiant attempt to kill the monstrous Blubberjaw ► **111**

If you still live ► **768**

685

Cross off the money. You respectfully pour the coins into the river, muttering a prayer as you do. The rushing subsides, the goddess has been propitiated. You sail on.

Continue to the delta ► 762
Debark onto the south bank ► 537
Debark onto the north bank ► 51

686

If you have the title **Friend of the Ferryman** ► **289** immediately. If not, read on.

You have come to the Gate of Tears, a huge, towering portico of dark granite. Carved into it are myriad faces – mothers, fathers, monsters, demons, dryads, centaurs and so on. All of them animated by the magic of death, as if they were alive, all of them crying a river of tears. That river spans the entrance to the underworld, like a lake of sorrow. And upon a black barge, seemingly made of shadow, stands Charon, the ferryman, wearing a funeral shroud, his face hooded, a great staff in one hand. He will punt you across the River of Tears if you wish to enter or leave Hades.

'It is forbidden for the living to enter the houses of the dead, but the gods sleep, things are not as they should be, and you are divinely favoured,' rasps Charon in a voice like bronze.

If you have the codewords ***Nadir*** or ***Naughty*** ► **814** immediately. If not, read on.

'So you may pass.' says Charon.

You can go:

East into the desert ► **686** in *The Hammer of the Sun*

South into the desert ► **400** in *The Hammer of the Sun*

North to the southern gate of Vulcan City ► **555** in *Workshop of the Gods*

South on the Sacred Way ► **72**

West into Hades ► **193**

687

A tentacle closes in but you spin and hack with all your strength and cut it in two. It falls to the deck of the barge, twitching. With a great rumbling shriek, the kraken sinks back down into the dark waters. Note that you have a **kraken's tentacle** on your Adventure Sheet.

'That was impressive,' sighs the bargeman shade. 'You really are a hero, aren't you?'

You shrug. Where to now?

Disembark and east ► **51**

Disembark and south-west ► **228**

Disembark and north-west ► **273**

Continue upriver by barge ► **364**

688

You hear a wailing howl in the distance. Such sounds are not unusual here in Hades but you check your surroundings anyway. Nothing. You turn your attention back to the heaped mound of ash. ► **608**

689

You try to persuade the silver minotaur face to open the doors, but your pleas fall on deaf ears. The silver face never wakes or speaks again.

After some time, the oil in the lantern runs out and you and Deucalion are plunged into absolute darkness. Slowly you start to die of thirst, trapped in this benighted place, alone in the black, lightless depths of the underworld. Although you may well find that the gods will aid you after death, there is no such relief for Deucalion. Or is there?

Lose the codeword ***Nibble*** and ► **111**

690

Lose the codewords ***Neverending*** and ***Projectile***. Gain the codeword ***Neveragain***.

You wait until the last moment, just as the demon-wolf is leaping for your throat and drop back, the arrow held up in front of you, allowing Wolfshadow to fall upon it with all of its weight and force. It is driven straight into its black, undead heart. With one final whimper, the undead wolf collapses upon you, but not before it manages to sink its teeth into your shoulder. If you are wounded already, gain 1 scar. If not, you are now, tick your wound box and read on.

You can hardly believe it is dead, despite your painful shoulder wound. Cross the **golden arrow of Artemis** off your Adventure Sheet; its purpose done, it has dissipated into nothingness.

After you've burned the hideous, flayed body of the undead wolf, just to be sure, you investigate the cave.

It is a grisly sight. There is blood everywhere with numerous dismembered bodies scattered around, gnawed bones, half eaten heads, a den of utter horror. But you are a hardened adventurer – nothing stands between you and your loot! You find amidst the ruined, twisted flesh of his victims, 150 pyr, a **lava gem**, some **honey of Hades** (made in the gardens of Persephone, heals a wound, cross it off after use) and the **Helm of the Lost Hero**. This ancient helmet is rusted and cracked, and is of no use on its own, but perhaps it will be useful later. Better hold on to it.

For your heroic deed, you also get +1 Glory.

Now ► **367**

691

You have already got everything that you can from this fishing hole using the lodestone.

If you try fishing again, in the ordinary way, and risk another collapse of the ice ► **335**

If not, there is nothing for you to do here but leave ► **586**

692

You claim that King Agamemnon has summoned you to entertain him, and start singing an epic song about his great achievements during the Trojan war. Make a CHARM roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **817**

Fail ► **553**

693

Aspasia continues. ‘This merchant was from Ephesus. He trades with a merchant from Persia, who in turn trades with a merchant from Gandhara in India. That merchant trades even farther afield with the land of the Seres, at the end of the Silk road. He returned with a short piece from a philosopher of that land, translated into Greek. I believe it comes from a school called “Tao”. I know little more than that, but I found the proposition intriguing and thought it would entertain you.’

Aspasia gets out a scroll and reads from it.

‘I, Chuang Chou, dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering here and there, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of my happiness as a butterfly, unaware that I was Chou but then I woke up to find myself back to be being Chuang Chou. The conundrum is this: I do not know whether I am a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly, dreaming I am a man….’

‘Note, Cleanthes, that the butterfly was happy, and thus enjoying life,’ says Aristippus.

‘What? How can a butterfly be happy, every moment must be lived in fear of the lick of the lizard or the tongue of the toad, to be snapped up and eaten in a moment. No, the life of a butterfly is to be endured, not enjoyed!’ replies Cleanthes.

‘I don’t think that’s really the point though is it? Isn’t it more about how we can reliably tell what is real, and what isn’t? To consider our own senses, and how we can be certain that what we know is real?’ says Xenophanes.

‘Indeed, an interesting conundrum. I propose we consider this matter. We’ll call it the dream of the butterfly. Let us think on it, and each will then provide a theory on the problem.’ says Protagoras.

‘I wonder what butterfly tastes like to the toad and the lizard,’ muses Aristippus.

‘Personally,’ says Protagoras, I am fairly certain that Cleanthes is in fact an insect, dreaming that he is a man, and I aim to prove it, or at least to propose a theorem to that effect that cannot be disproved!’

They continue in this vein. You take your leave or you will be stuck listening to their musings for all eternity.

Aspasia says to you as you go, ‘Please come back to us, adventurer – perhaps you can bring us proof one way or the other on Zeno’s arrow and

the dream of the butterfly, just like you did with the proposition that all things come to those that wait. Good luck, and thank you!’

- **144**

694

You scream a war cry and run at the guards. You take them by surprise, and defeat them quickly, but they are able to give the alarm, and soon more of them arrive. It’s an army of warrior shades, veterans, armed and armoured.

You cannot win; you never could. They cut you down. You die more of a fool than a hero. But death is not the end for you, perhaps you will be able to come back and try something different next time.

► **111**

695

There are no more lava gems in easy reach, you have harvested them all. There is nothing more for you here so you leave the river of fire:

North ► **711**

West to the confluence of the Styx and the Phlegethon ► **504**

East ► **193**

South to the swamps ► **38**

696

If you have any or all of the codewords ***Planted***, ***Pure*** or ***Pino***, lose them.

You have come to a sprawling Necropolis, the city of the dead, the capital of this benighted land. At its centre a single, tomb-smothered hill rises up over the city like a gravestone. Upon its peak is the Palace of the Dead, where Hades and Persephone once ruled from their now empty thrones. Instead, the gods sleep, entombed. Round and about its foothills, tomb complexes and houses of the dead spread outward like the suburbs of a living city. Shades of the long dead stalk its streets at night, their deeds in life long forgotten.

Explore the city ► **10**
North-west to the bridge ► **821**
North-east ► **237**
South-east ► **330**
South-west ► **458**

697

You simply charge right at them with a blood curdling war-cry. They step back, astonished.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 7

Succeed ► **384**

Fail ► **414**

698

You enter a wide circular chamber. Around the walls many torches fill the space with light. In the middle of the round space is a sarcophagus of white marble, with a carved frieze depicting various scenes, presumably from the life of whoever is entombed therein.

As you step forward, a sinister voice says,

‘Welcome to the crypt of darkness, fool!’

And with that all the lights go out and you are plunged into total darkness…

► **201**

699

After a short while, the river course opens out into a large cavernous chamber. It looks like some kind of underground rapids for it seems the waters are boiling violently. As you near, you realize it is not the waters of the river at all, but hundreds of gigantic maggots, pallid, white, and ravenous, each the size of your arm! They are feeding on the rotting corpses of the penurious dead… At the far end, the river courses onward. You cannot go directly through this maggot horde, they will devour you in seconds. Your choices are to attempt to deftly run around the edge as fast as you can, or to distract them with something. You can throw one of these, if you have them:

honey of hades ► 219
fresh fish ► 120
harpy's egg ► 258
shrivelled heart ► 14
venison sausages or **strix stew** ► 784

Or, if you don't want to, or have none of the above, make a run for it ► 308

700

Get the codewords ***Nimbus*** and ***Newhouse***. Note that, try as you might, you cannot get rid of the sceptre. You may lay it down for a time, but eventually it returns to your hand, tendrils of night gripping you tightly.

You come to the bridge of Elysium that leads to the main part of the Necropolis. It is clear of barricades and warrior shades of yesteryear. Rhadamanthus the Judge is waiting for you.

‘Agamemnon has been defeated, well done, well done, we cannot thank you enough! Hades will be pleased, as soon as he wakes, that is…. Hold on...You didn’t destroy...you are now the bearer of the sceptre? Are you sure that’s wise?’

‘Don’t worry, I won’t be trying to steal the underworld from its god,’ you say wryly.

‘Still, you look… well, shadowy. Are you all right?’

‘I’m fine. Now, my reward.’ you say.

‘Ah, yes, of course.’ He hands you a scroll, the deeds to a house in Elysium.

‘And here.’ He gives you 100 pyr. ‘Enjoy!’ With that he leaves to return to the palace. You decide to visit your new house.

► **100**

701

You come round to find yourself tied up and laid out on top of a marble sarcophagus in some kind of tomb. You can see Mormo fussing over a large cauldron. She is in full form as a lamia, her upper half a woman, the lower half scaled and serpentine. There is a foul stink in the air.

'Now then, cinnamon or wild thyme?' mutters Mormo. She glances back at you. 'Hmm… likely to be chewy this one, maybe a ginger and vinegar marinade first?'

Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 9.

Succeed ► **403**

Fail ► **284**

703

Your god brings you into their presence. It is like being dazzled by the light of a hundred suns. You crouch, shivering in awe, as the god's words boom in your ears: 'That was the third and last of the labours of this realm.'

Note the codeword ***Nomad*** and give yourself + 1 Glory. If you also have the codewords ***Ode***, ***Pheon*** and ***Quince***, immediately ► **93**; otherwise read on.

'When you have completed all twelve labours you will have proved yourself the greatest of my champions,' says your god. 'But to do that you must travel to the other realms of the Vulcanverse.'

Now turn to the section number written in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet.

704

The demon’s jaws grip your arm in an unbreakable vice, and twists you down to the ground. Almost casually, Wolfshadow pins you with his forepaws, his legs twin piledrivers of flayed muscle, and rips out your throat. You die vomiting blood. Soon, you too, will be a grisly trophy at Wolfshadow’s door, along with the Myrmidon from far off Iskandria. For you, however, death is not the end.

Get the codeword ***Neverending*** and then ► **111**

705

You notice that Blubberjaw's chains are held together by iron padlocks that have been weakened by the heat. Perhaps if you target those… Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 7

Succeed ► **573**

Fail ► **684**

706

Cross off the **recurve bow**, and gain the codeword ***New-Artemis***.

The priestess accepts your donation. Now you can get blessings here. If you are a worshipper of Artemis, blessings are free. If not, you must pay 10 pyr per blessing. You can have a total of three blessings at a time. Each blessing can be used to roll again when you fail an attribute check (CHARM, GRACE, INGENUITY or STRENGTH) but only once in any given situation – so if you fail the re-roll, you can't spend another blessing to try again.

When you have finished here ► **325**

707

You step into the tomb. The walls are covered in a mural of a tragic Arcadian woodland scene – a dryad weeps over the body of a young man; woodland nymphs pull at their hair and clothes in a forest funeral; satyrs, heads bowed in grief, carry a bier upon which rests the body of a dryad.

In the middle of the room a hunched figure is rocking back and forth, sobbing. Her hair is more a tangled mass of brambles, her clothes more like leaves. She turns and looks up at you. It is Karya, still here, mourning, suffering, sobbing.

She turns away, back to her grief. How can love cause so much pain you wonder? There is nothing you can do to help.

► 575

708

You walk up to the great double doors that are the entrance to the throne room of Hades. The doors are made of beaten gold, lined with black marble. If your Glory is 3 or more, ► **636** immediately. If not, read on.

You try and push the doors open, but they will not move. A sepulchral voice echoes in your head, ‘Wretched mortal, you are not worthy to enter the throne room of Hades!’

Wretched mortal? Not worthy? How insulting! Still, you cannot enter, and that’s that. Will you:

Investigate the stairwell ► **163**

Leave the Palace ► **10**

709

You back away, ducking and dodging the great haymakers she is swinging at your head. If just one of them connects…

However, you are able to avoid them long enough to make it to the exit corridor where you turn tail and flee for your life. You can hear her chasing you, but she turns back once you're out in the open. You heave a sigh of relief. Perhaps you can come back later and try a different tack.

► 76

710

You recall the philosophers' picnic you helped create by bringing them a hamper from Arcadia and the journeys and adventures it led you to. But most importantly, you remember all the (irritating) rhetoric and absurd logic of it all.

You begin a back and forth discussion with Deucalion, remembering some of the tactics Protagoras the Sophist used to bend the logic around questions such as 'all things come to those who wait' or whether existence is but a dream, and so on. After a short while, the minotaur pipes up.

'Please, I'm trying to sleep!'

You ignore him and carry on the discussion, following a particularly circular argument about the nature of perception and the point of existence itself. For instance, is the life of a bee as valuable as the life of a philosopher? And is that as valuable as the life of a queen or for that matter, a semi-sentient being whose only function is to set puzzles for passing humans?

'By the gods, are you mad!' cries the minotaur face in increasing agitation.

Then you introduce the concept of Zeno's arrow, and how therefore all motion is an illusion.

'Arg! I can't stand to hear another word of your so called logic! My head is going to explode,' wails the minotaur.

'Well now,' you say slyly, 'if you were to open the door and let us through, we would bother you no more.'

'I...but... I'm not supposed...'

You begin to discuss whether or not man is a dream of the butterfly.

'All right, all right! I'll let you through, just never bother me again!' With that, the great iron doors swing open, and you both step through. Deucalion claps you on the shoulder with a grin. 'Well done,' he says.

► **394**

711

You have come to the land between the rivers, or the underworld Mesopotamia as it is sometimes known. Except there are no cities or great civilisations, just the wandering dead… To the north and west flow the thick black waters of the river of hate, the Styx. To the south boils the Phlegethon, the river of fire. Smoke and flame curl skyward. Nearby you see a ghostly shade seated at an easel with a large canvas in front of him. An artist, here in Hades? Will you:

- Investigate the artist ► 792
- Head north ► 60
- West ► 330
- South-west ► 504
- South to the Phlegethon ► 169
- South-east ► 193

712

They are too swift and you cannot outrun them. Although you manage to kill one or two, they swarm all over you, and you are savagely pecked and sliced.

Tick the Wound box on your Adventure Sheet. If you were already wounded, then death is swift, for they slice you up, drink your blood and eat your eyeballs. ► **111**; if not, read on.

You beat a hasty retreat, and the strixes, having lost a few more of their number, are happy to let you go. You leave this place ► **564**

713

If you have the **sceptre of Agamemnon**, roll a die. If you score a 1 or a 2 ► **627**; if not, read on.

You have reached the far north of Hades. To the east the great cyclopean walls of Vulcan City rise up into the grey skies of the underworld. To the north, huge mountains like the pillars of the sky rise up to scrape the roof of Hades.

To the west, you can see what looks like a massive gate of some kind, a way into and out of Hades. You cannot get into the mountains of Boreas from here for the veil of the shadow of death that surrounds the underworld prevents all travel into and out of Hades, save through its two great gates – or perhaps there are other, more secret ways but those remain to be discovered...

There is an iron hatch here in the ground at the base of the walls of Vulcan City. What will you do?

Head for the gate ► **454**
Examine the hatch ► **775**
Follow the wall south ► **325**

714

To see what you find, roll one die.

score 1: **laurel wreath**
score 2: **hardwood club**
score 3: **recurve bow**
score 4: **hornbook**
score 5: **roll of canvas**
score 6: three **lava gems**

When you are done, will you:

Climb to the top ► **789**
Explore the mountainside ► **644**
Leave the volcano ► **410**

715

Gain the codeword ***Night***. Gingerly, you hand the sceptre to Agamemnon, unsure if you can trust him. He takes it, and tendrils of night reach out from the staff to wrap around his arm. For a moment, his eyes are filled with stars, like a clear night sky.

'Thank you,' he says. Orestes steps forward, intent on violence, but his father holds him back. 'No, I swore an oath, that cannot be broken, son,' he says. He hands you the deeds to a fine villa nearby along with 150 pyr. 'Enjoy your new abode,' he says. 'We could use a living warrior like you. We should be allies. Will you come to me if I call for you?' he asks.

'I'll consider it,' you say. 'Thanks for the gifts.'

Agamemnon nods. 'Until next time'.

You take your leave and decide to check out your new villa.

► **28**

716

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **785** immediately. If not, read on.

Hydna and the funeral barge, the *Threnody* are moored in their usual place. She spots you and says, ‘Well hello there! If it isn’t the hero of the Vulcanverse, slayer of the hydra king, and actual living person, with skin and bones and blood and stuff! It’s good to see you.’

‘Greetings, Hydna. I’m just passing through, thought I’d say hello.’

‘Would you like another trip of the Black Bayou? I’ll take you on the alternative tour. Free of charge of course. Be warned though – it’s the cruel and unusual punishments tour, and it’s not for the faint-hearted!’

Go on another tour ► **136**

Leave ► **796**

717

If you have the codeword ***Nasty*** ► **382** immediately. If not, read on.

You are at the old, haunted farmhouse. The sign at the entrance has sagged a little more now, but it still says ‘Execratos’. The farmhouse itself has crumbled away almost entirely, there are only low walls and rubble left. The well is choked with mud and dust.

A faint wind brings the sound of the whispering dead to your ears. There is nothing here for you. Time to move on. ► **412**

718

This stairwell leads down to the Chamber of Fates, home of the Moirai. There are footprints in the dust on the stairs – your own, for this is not your first visit. As you walk down the corridor of living tapestries, you hear voices from the chamber ahead.

‘The hero has returned,’ says one.

‘Then we must away,’ says the second.

‘But what if the mortal has honey cakes?’ says the third.

‘Don’t you know already?’ says the second.

‘Oh come on, I can’t be expected to remember everything, can I!’ says the third.

‘Enough! We must go, for destiny is as it is.’

You enter the Chamber of the Fates to find it completely deserted. In the corner is another stairway, the one that leads further into the depths of Tartarus.

Go back to the surface ► **8**

Go down ► **730**

719

If you have the **golden arrow of Artemis** ► 688. If not, read on.

A terrible howl fills the gloomy half-light of Hades. It chills your blood for you recognize that sound. It is the undead demon creature, Wolfshadow. Dread grips your heart for you remember what they say about him – those who hear his howl are doomed…. You spot him coming down out of the mountains to the north, running towards you! How did he find you? You also recall that he is invulnerable… You have no choice but to throw him off the scent somehow.

If you have any of **honey of Hades**, **weasel blood**, a **caged canary**, **fresh fish**, **a harpy's egg**, a **centaur's skull**, **venison sausages**, some **strix stew** or a **shrivelled heart** and wish to discard it ► 345

If not, you'll have to try and lose Wolfshadow somehow ► 506

720

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 194 immediately. If not, read on.

The antechamber is also well lit, with bronze statues on your left and right of two hugely fat, balding men with distended pot bellies. Beyond them, is a wide doorway leading to a much larger space beyond. You walk onward.

If you have a **clockwork owl** ► 288

If not, ► 349

721

Hydna drops you at the shoreline of Sisyphus's hill. As you arrive, the man-sized rock rolls down the hill to the bottom. With a great groan of despair, Sisyphus begins to make his way down, preparing to push the boulder up the hill again but you simply roll it into the black waters of the bayou where it sinks out of sight. Sisyphus comes down the hill, looking bemused.

'Where... what...' he mutters. And then he looks around more alert. 'Could it be? he says, 'Can it be true? It is the rock that compels me, without it... yes, yes, I am free!' He hugs you ecstatically. 'Free at last!'

He may be free, but you have indeed offended the gods. Lose all blessings, if you have any. On the other hand, you have won the gratitude of Sisyphus.

You take him on the barge with Hydna back to land. He thanks you profusely and then leaves, saying that he has to 'get his head straight' after so such endless toil but that if you should ever need him, as long as it is not to help the Olympian gods whom he can never forgive for what they have done to him, he will come to your aid.

'And remember, I am cunning! More cunning than the gods, my ingenuity knows no bounds!' are Sisyphus's parting words. Gain the title **Sisyphean Taskmaster**.

You consider the other two, but Hydna refuses to take you for fear of bringing the disfavour of the gods down on her own head too. You could swim to them but you know the bayou is infested with tentacled horrors and how would you get out after without Hydna's barge? It is time to say your farewells to Hydna and leave the Black Bayou.

► **796**

722

The battle is hard fought but the lamia is too fast. Her face lights up with malicious glee and she rakes you with her filthy, taloned nails that are like needles of black iron.

‘Oh my,’ she cries, ‘You look delicious! I’ll save a few drops of your blood to toast Typhon himself tonight!’

If you are already wounded ► **69**

If not ► **109**

723

Now you have this part of the river all to yourself. The water rolls past, the sunlight hangs in droplets amid the leaves. It is a perfect day. The perfect day of your early life.

But there is one cloud in the otherwise clear sky. Why? Why didn't you want the children to stay? You can be honest with yourself, especially in a dream.

'I didn't want them to see I can't swim.' ► **438**

'They're just annoying. That's reason enough.' ► **519**

'I came to catch some fish and they were scaring them away.' ► **562**

724

You are a great warrior, a hero of the Vulcanverse but even you are no match for Death Dealer, the champion of Thanatos. He charges into you with his shield and whilst you are off balance, hammers the side of your head with the reverse edge of his axe, and knocks you out.

You wake to find that you've been thrown over the hindquarters of Death Dealer's horse. You have been bound hand and foot and gagged.

Up ahead looms the volcano of death, where it is said there is an entrance to the Tartarus, the home of Thanatos.

'Won't be long now, Daisy, we're nearly there,' mutters Death Dealer in a gentle but nevertheless doom-laden whisper as he pats his horse's neck.

Daisy? Did he really call her that? Or are you suffering from some kind of concussion?

Anyway, you examine your bonds. Maybe you can get out of this.

Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **266**

Fail ► **623**

725

Do you have some **blessed soil of Arcadia**? If you do ► 103 immediately. If not, read on.

You'd agreed to bring some blessed soil for the innkeeper.

'You haven't got it?' she shouts. 'Then what are doing here?! Get out, and don't come back without it!'.

There is nothing more for you here and it is time to move on. Will you go:

North along the Way ► 346

East to the delta ► 493

726

‘You have failed the test,’ says the golden sphinx face, ‘and the wages of failure is death.’

The face breathes out a cloud of noxious vapours. There is nowhere in the sealed space you are in to avoid the gas. You are forced to breathe it in, and you die in agony, trapped in this benighted place, alone in the black, lightless depths of the underworld. Although you may well find that the gods will aid you after death, there is no such relief for Deucalion. Or is there?

Lose the codeword ***Nibble*** and ► **111**

727

You spot a basket of reeds slowly floating down river towards you. You show the ghostly bargeman.

‘So?’ he says with a spectral shrug.

‘We should pick it up,’ you say.

‘Why?’

‘What if it contains silver or gold or….’

‘Bah, of course it won’t, it never has, and never will,’ he intones.

‘Nothing ventured, nothing gained,’ you say.

He heaves a sepulchral sigh. ‘If we must…’

He heaves the barge to. ‘Go on then, have a look,’ he says.

► **322**

728

As you leave the main gate of the garden, a nearby shade, sitting on a bench, says ‘You need the key.’

‘Well, obviously,’ you reply.

‘The old head gardener had it, if I recall,’ muses the phantom shade.

‘And what happened to him?’ you ask

‘Eaten by Polykephales, King of the Hydra, after he took a holiday tour of the black bayou, or so they say,’ grates the ghost, before wandering off. You continue on your way to the northern foothills of the City of the Dead. It is neatly laid out here, with baths, gardens and pillared avenues. Marble statues of goddesses and heroines are dotted around.

Nearby, near a fountain and a copse of white poplars, several shades sit as if in discussion. Will you go:

To the gathering of shades ► **770**

East towards Vulcan City ► **325**

West to the Necropolis ► **696**

South towards the Styx ► **330**

North-west to the river ► **821**

729

You turn to fight, but you are already weakened by wounds. The undead wolf-demon buffets you to the ground, and then, almost casually, pins your chest with his forepaws, his legs twin piledrivers of flayed muscle, snaps his jaws, and rips out your throat. You have become a dog's dinner.

At least for you, even though you've been eaten, death is not the end ► 111

730

You descend further into the depths of the underworld. The stairwell opens out into a vast, underground cavern filled with a great roaring sound. Up above, the roof disappears into darkness, but water drips down from stalactites that point down out of the dark. The cavern is lit with a flickering orange-red glow, as if from some great fire, but you cannot see the source of the flames. You walk on through a forest of man-high stalagmites, until you come to the source of the great roaring sound and of the flames, at the centre of the cavern – the headwaters of all the rivers of Hades.

A large black mound of solid rock pushes up from the ground like a small volcano, and out of its top spout five great streams than run down its sides and off to the nooks and corners of this cavern, where they disappear underground.

One of them is the Phlegethon, the river of fire, and its burning flames are the source of the light. The others are the Acheron, the river of woe, the Styx, the river of hate, the Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, and the Cocytus, the icy river of wailing, though the last is more of an ice floe than a river like frozen sludge. As the lumps of ice grind up against each other, they give off an eerie wailing sound...

The cavern is vast and empty save for the keening wail of the ice and the eldritch light of the flames of hell. You are alone at its centre...

You feel abandoned, and without hope, here at the heart of the underworld. You pull yourself together – time to get on with something that will clear your head.

If you have **Lethe water** you may refill your vial up to 3 drafts (add **x3** next to it). If it is already full than you cannot fill it any more. It seems only this magic vial can hold the waters of the Lethe.

You may also bathe in the headwaters of the river Styx. As it is the river of hate, you lose one blessing, but you will also lose one scar. Cross them off, if you do.

When you are ready at one end of the cavern you see a great archway, at the other, the stairs by which you came. Will you:

Return to the surface ► **8**

Enter the archway ► **33**

731

You are on the Sacred Way, at the southernmost edge of the underworld. The air is full of ashes here, blown out of the interior by a warm wind that reeks of smoke and grave-rot. If you have the codeword ***Nadir*** ► **440** immediately. If not, from here you can go:

East along the Sacred Way ► **72**
West along the Sacred Way ► **306**
North-east to the plains ► **412**
North to the Slimeswamp ► **38**

732

If you have the codeword ***Navarine*** ► 167 immediately. If not, read on.

You have returned to the wreck of the *Argo*. It still slowly rots, as does the body of the man under the prow. You wonder where his shade is… Anyway, you already found the **Journal of the Argo**, but have you found the key that opens the great bronze chest? If you have **Jason's key** ► 665 immediately.

If not, read on, there is nothing you can do but head back to the delta. ► 493

733

If you have the title **Grief Stricken** ► 263 immediately. If not, read on.

The statue is of a woman but it is roughly hewn, almost as if it were a natural formation, but certain features, especially around the eyes, show that it must have been sculpted. Or created in some other way, for it has an uncanny otherness about it. You can see tears flowing down its face. They flow continuously, and have worn shallow funnels in the stone. A miasma of melancholy seems to emanate from the statue. Just looking at it makes you sad, it as if the sculptor had somehow managed to sculpt sorrow itself. A message has been carved into the statue's base: 'THE WEEPING ROCK. WHATEVER YOU DO, DO NOT DRINK THE TEARS!'

Will you:

Drink the tears ► 606

Go back ► 60

734

You reach for a lava gem, but you are struck by a ball of flaming river oil, and badly burned.

Tick the Wound box on your Adventure Sheet. If you were already wounded, you die in searing agony as the flames engulf you! ► **111**

If you still live, read on. You can make another attempt to get a lava gem ► **787** or leave the river of fire:

North ► **711**

West to the confluence of the Styx and the Phlegethon ► **504**

East ► **193**

South to the swamps ► **38**

735

You pull the lever and are instantaneously engulfed in flames! ‘Aieeee!’ you cry but then you realise it’s just a trick of the light. What you thought was flames was just everything rushing past you like a blur. Moments later you find yourself at the far edge of Hades, near the great walls of Vulcan City.

► **713**

736

You race around the edge of the chamber. It is tricky for the light is poor, and the chamber floor strewn with rocks, but you manage to keep your footing, crushing a maggot or two underfoot along the way. They surge towards you, but you are too quick and you run away down the river tunnel to safety.

► **589**

737

You explain how you crept your way through the spider infested Slimeswamp, sneaked into the temple of Arachne, and slew the spiderling, Syna, half woman, half giant spider, and high priestess of the spider queen. Naturally, you embellish the tale.

‘Amazing,’ says Lampeto. ‘You are a great hero, I’ll give you that. But what is the point of this? There’s no point trying to impress us, we can’t, for instance, be your girlfriend, right? We’re shades. You know. Dead.’

‘Umm… no, no, it’s just I discovered a tunnel in the temple that leads to Arcadia and the wildwood. From there I’m sure three resourceful shades like you could get to the mountains of Boreas.’

‘Ah, I see. Yes, we could. Well done, they shall sing of you in the heroic ballads I shall commission, when I am queen again. Come, take us to this tunnel.’

► **240**

738

Moved by her piteous cries and what must be a terrible story of pain and suffering that lies behind her journey, you kneel down and put a hand on her shoulder.

‘It’s not too late, let me help you. Perhaps we can save your children, at least.’

‘Yes, perhaps,’ she says, putting her arms around you and then sobbing into your shoulder. Astonished, you cradle her head. Can she really be saved? But then she whispers in your ear, ‘You fool! You know nothing!’ and sinks her fangs into your neck, injecting deadly venom before you can react. You sink into unconsciousness.

► **701**

739

You charge in. ‘So be it,’ says Tantalus. He draws out a short spear and the gold statuette of a dog. He throws the statuette to the ground. Immediately it unfolds itself into a mechanical automaton of a large dog of shining gold. It moves to defend its master. This will not be so easy a battle as you’d thought.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 9.

Succeed ► **827**

Fail ► **311**

740

You put your money down. Cross 10 pyr off your Sheet. The incense is beginning to blur your senses but you can still remember your name and how you came to the Vulcanverse. You announce yourself to the oracle of the dead. All is quiet for a moment and then a voice as if from the very air itself whispers in your ear. ‘Choose!’

STRENGTH ► **801**

GRACE ► **254**

CHARM ► **464**

INGENUITY ► **559**

741

You pop the soft-drop into your mouth – you almost spit it out immediately, for it tastes vile. But you step off the edge, along with Deucalion.

And fall...

And fall...

And fall...

You are hurtling down into darkness, a vile taste in your mouth, a rotten stink coming up to greet you and absolute terror in your heart, for all you can see below is a yawning, empty blackness, as if you were falling into the vast maw of some primordial, galactic elder deity.

You start praying to the gods, including all the gods that ever were, that are, and all the gods will be that the blue candy in your mouth really is magical.

► **571**

742

You can try again, but each time you try it will cost you 10 pyr in offerings to appease the god and wipe away your previous failure. You can give up (in which case ► **493**) or pay 10 pyr and make a CHARM roll at difficulty 7. You can keep paying until you succeed, in which case ► **36**.

743

You have returned to the volcano of Thanatos. Every now and then it releases a rumbling belch of fetid smoke up into the atmosphere, bringing down a foul stinking sprinkling of blackened powder that falls like rain. Its sides are blackened with ash, and its foothills covered in hardened once-liquid lava, like glue that has set in misshapen mounds and twisted whorls of rock. Heaps of ash and slag are scattered around and about. Will you:

Search through the ashes ► **11**
Climb to the top ► **789**
Explore the mountainside ► **644**
Leave the volcano ► **410**

744

You come to a large, open space before a great podium. Many shades are gathered here – or rather have been herded here. Up on a the podium, Agamemnon is making a speech. Around the edges of the gathering, shade warriors armed with spears and shields make sure the crowd applaud and cheer at the right moments. The noise they make is eerie and unsettling, like a chorus of spectral moans.

Agamemnon speaks through a brazen trumpet that amplifies his rasping voice, as he talks of a new future, how this is only the beginning and that he and his army of shades warriors will conquer the rest of the City of the Dead, and then all of Hades! He too seems strangely animated by some kind of dark energy. Flanking him are his dread lieutenants, including his son, Orestes. They are armed and armoured for war.

Agamemnon holds his sceptre in one hand, more like a staff of silver and gold than a sceptre. It was built by Vulcan himself, Zeus carried it, it was handed down to Pelops, son of Tantalus, and eventually to Pelops' grandson, Agamemnon, who used it to command the armies of the Archaeans at Troy. But now it seems to radiate power, and is darkness or rather the night itself, somehow. Is it the source of this strange dark energy?

► **105**

745

‘Eh? A talking butterfly? What the… And eat my… what is it saying? Anyway, whatever, I don’t eat nuts, I eat manflesh – your manflesh!’ says Trapjaw, the daemon in the dark.

In the time he has taken to say those words, the butterfly’s light has grown. In its ruby glow you can make out a hideous form. The head is human-like, but pale grey with three short sharp horns on either side of its hairless skull, red glowing eyes, fangs, claws – and massive, snapping jaws of bone where its chest should be! Trapjaw of the Crypts of Darkness. A hideous monstrosity from the depths of hell indeed.

The butterfly shines brightly, its flickering ruby light bathing the tomb, and Trapjaw, in an incongruous rosy glow.

Trapjaw hisses, and puts a taloned hand over his eyes, momentarily blinded.

Make a STRENGTH or a GRACE roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **481**

Fail ► **229**

746

You have come to an old battlefield. Bodies litter the ground, along with various armaments, shields and such. It looks like some kind of battle between red shields and black shields. In the middle, you see an altar. As you draw closer your realise it was once a shrine dedicated to Ares, the god of war, the man-slaughterer, insatiable in battle.

However, you are not welcome here. You cannot re-consecrate this shrine whilst you have the title **Accursed of Ares**. There is nothing else you can do but leave.

► **117**

747

Cross **Aphrodite's kiss** off your Adventure Sheet. You take out the small heart-shaped ball of glowing crimson light that is **Aphrodite's kiss** from your backpack, place it on your palm and aim at Zoë.

'What is that?' she says.

'Aphrodite's kiss!' you say.

'What? No wait!' says the golden maiden, putting up a hand.

You blow Zoë a kiss....

► **156**

748

If you have the codeword ***Nirvana*** ► 137 immediately. If not, read on.

Helen has granted you free use of the Inn of the White Poplars. You can stay here, rest and heal up. Untick your Wound box, if you are wounded. You look around. In one corner, the shade of a bard, playing a lyre, is singing a song. In another, two ghostly forms are in deep discussion. At the bar, Anchises still drinks but there is a new barkeep, as Helen is in Arcadia, looking for a place to build another inn. The new barkeep welcomes you in a thin reedy voice. 'I was a librarian once, in old Iskandria, but now I run a bar in Hades,' he says.

You can buy and sell a few things here at the following prices:

	To buy	*To sell*
strix stew	20 pyr	15 pyr
pomegranate wine	–	35 pyr
honey cake	–	50 pyr

When you are done, you can:

Listen to the bard ► 160
Talk to Anchises ► 680
Talk to the shades in the corner ► 475
Leave and head north ► 346
Leave and head to the delta ► 493

749

You are travelling on the Sacred Way in the north-west of the underworld. A cold wind blows off the ocean to the west. It is actually quite refreshing as the winds of Hades are usually redolent with death, decay and despair. From here, you can go:

- North to the mountains ► **226**
- South along the Sacred Way ► **346**
- North-east, inland ► **12**
- South-east, inland ► **117**

750

Your character is no more; Thanatos has claimed you. You will have to start all over again. Delete all codewords, titles, items, wounds, scars, blessings and so on from your Adventure Sheet and from all of the Vulcanverse books you own. You will also have to delete all items in storage in vaults, houses, villas and palaces. When you are done you can start again in any Vulcanverse book.

751

You put him back under the waters. He groans, feebly trying to pick himself up, but soon he is under once more, paralysed, presumably sustained somehow by the roots of the mangrove trees until it is time for them to implant their seeds within them, or whatever it is that is going on. You back off a little into sparser land where there are fewer trees and no bodies, and the spiders come to a halt. Slowly they disperse back into the depths of the swamp. Will you:

Go deeper into the swamp, if you are brave enough ► 773

Get out this horrific place ► 25

752

You are in the north-west mountains of Hades. To the east, you can make out the great northern gate, the Gate of Ivory, the only way in and out of Hades here in the north for the Veil of the Shadow of Death that surrounds the underworld prevents all travel in and out of Hades, unless it be through one its gates. Will you go:

To the Gate of Ivory ► **454**

South ► **12**

West to the Sacred Way ► **474**

753

The dream breaks and flies apart like smoke in a strong wind. All that you have seen is in your past, or perhaps exists only in the imagination that fuels your memories of the past.

You have now filled in your Adventure Sheet with the details of your god, your attribute scores, and perhaps one or two other things besides. It is time to enter the underworld...

What woke you?

The barking of dogs ► **418**

The lapping of waves ► **396**

754

You have reached the far north of Hades. To the east the great cyclopean walls of Vulcan City rise up into the grey skies of the underworld. To the north, huge mountains, atop which rest the High Steppes of Boreas, also rise up to scrape the roof of Hades.

To the west, you can see what looks like a massive gate of some kind, a way into and out of Hades.

You notice something at the base of the walls of Vulcan City. On closer examination, you can see an iron hatch in the ground. Could that be a tunnel into the city? What will you do?

Head for the gate ► **454**

Open the hatch ► **775**

Follow the wall south ► **325**

755

You approach the two cart drivers. They are shades, ghosts of the dead but they are very loud, angry and vocal. Their carts are pulled by a couple of very docile oxen. On closer inspection, you can see that they are in fact undead oxen, red-eyed, and skeletal.

'What's going on here?' you ask.

'This idiot won't get out of my way!' says one, dressed in funeral robes, but with a chef's hat on his head.

'Bah, I was here first, it's that stubborn dunderhead who should move!' says the other, a woman also in funeral robes but with a wineskin slung over one shoulder.

'And who are you?' you ask.

'I am Pintner,' she says. 'The... the vintner...'

'And I am Cimon the pie-man,' says the other. 'And the people need to eat but I cannot feed them whilst this absurd excuse for a shade is in my way.'

'Hah, this is the underworld, what do you think the people want most – pies or wine!' says the other.

You take a look at Cimon's cart it is indeed full of several crates of pies but as far as you can tell from the smell – and also the maggots – they have been rotting away for some time.

As for the other cart, there are several amphorae of wine in the back but wine does not last long at all in Hades before it turns to vinegar. Anyway, perhaps you can convince them to put aside their differences and clear the way. Make a CHARM roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **281**

Fail ► **355**

756

As you are contemplating where to explore next, when a strange whirring sound from above fills year ears. You look up, and see a winged chariot, flying through the air, pulled by two mechanical bulls made of bronze! Fire and smoke blows from their nostrils as they ride the sky. And is that Tantalus, driving them on? Tantalus who you freed, and in return he locked you in the tomb of Pelops, his own son that he murdered, and left you to die?

The chariot passes overhead and then comes down somewhere behind the old abandoned temple to Hades. You set off in pursuit – time to make him pay for his crime.

► 557

757

If you have the codeword ***Nifty*** ► 251 immediately. If not, read on.

If you have the title **The Gardener** ► 246. If not, read on.

The key of copper and jade fits perfectly into the lock. You turn it with ease. There's a whirring, clanking sound and then slowly, ever so slowly the ancient door creaks open. You step through, into what would have been an amazing vista of a formal, classical garden There are fountains, statues, gazebos and arbours. Pomegranate trees line marble walkways. Plant boxes line every pathway. Bone-white poplars are mixed in with black-barked trees to make contrasting patterns.

Or at least they did…. Now everything has fallen into decay and ruin. The fountains bubble no more, the statues are stained with filth. Everywhere, blood-red weeds, copper-coloured crimson-tipped thorns and black brambles choke the life out of everything.

At the centre of the garden is a pavilion of pillared marble, adorned with sculptures of what must be Persephone tending her garden. You set out towards it.

► 659

758

‘Ten obviously,’ you say with false bravado.

‘Wrong. It’s twelve,’ says the bronze face gleefully.

‘Twelve!’ says Deucalion immediately.

‘What? No, that’s... oh bother,’ says the door. ‘Oh dear, well, umm... that’s right, it’s just... well, don’t tell anyone about this, OK?’

You both nod. Then the face grimaces as the great iron doors slowly grind open, splitting the bronze gorgon in two. You and Deucalion step through the into a corridor beyond. Behind you, the iron doors close shut with an ominous clang. There is no way back…

► **512**

759

With all of your willpower and determination, you are able to throw off Nyx's attempt to dominate you. But for how long?

She whispers in your head. 'Why such resistance, mortal? As a child of night, you won't have to worry about what to do, who to fight. I will provide for all your needs, all your decisions. Think about that. Until next time, farewell.' Her voice fades into darkness.

Now turn to the paragraph number written in your Current Location box.

760

You turn tail and flee. Behind you, the black cloud of screeching strixes swoop down after you, copper beaks snapping together like cacophonous castanets of doom.

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **663**

Fail ► **712**

761

You step forward and hew mightily at the spiderling's head, but she dodges aside, and you stumble forward. She deftly grabs you in her arms and sinks her spider fangs into your shoulder, injecting her venom. You break away, but then her poison begins to course through your veins. You feel a dark, insidious pleasure, like nothing you've felt before, suffusing your entire being. Euphoric joy, a kind of sin-filled delight fills your brain.

The spiderling smiles an evil smile. Soon, your will is entirely hers. You are utterly addicted, and will do anything for what she calls 'Arachne's Kiss' and you become her slave, her minion, forced to do her bidding forever. Not even the gods can save you now, for you are not dead, merely the plaything of another.

► **750**

762

The *Sea Shadow* floats gently down the Styx until it reaches the Delta of Darkness.

‘I can go no further, but if you cross the delta to the Acheron, you may find my cousin… err…. I forget his name. Anyway, he can take you upriver in his barge the… err...Shadow something? So long since we spoke…’

You nod your thanks.

‘Farewell, living one. Good luck,’ says the bargeman.

You walk on to the Delta of Darkness.

► **493**

763

‘Before you go, I must ask – have you found my gold obols yet?’

If you have some **gold obols** and wish to hand them over to Charon ► 27 immediately. If not, read on.

‘Not yet, dread lord, but I know who stole them. Orphea is her name, a renowned rapscallion and impudent thief, and I will hunt her down, I promise!’

‘Good, go then, with my blessing!’ says Charon. From here you can go:

East into the desert ► **686** in *The Hammer of the Sun*

South into the desert ► **400** in *The Hammer of the Sun*

North to the southern gate of Vulcan City ► **555** in *Workshop of the Gods*

South on the Sacred Way ► **72**

West into Hades ► **193**

764

‘To get into the garden, you need Persephone’s key,’ says Tiresias.

‘Well, yes, I know, that’s obvious, but where is it?’ you add.

‘No idea,’ he says.

‘What? I can’t believe I paid for this!’

Tiresias shrugs. ‘You asked, I answered. Such is life – or should I say death?’

► **198**

765

□

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 649 immediately. If not, read on.

You step aboard the *Shadow on the Waters*. The bargeman, a shade in rather fine purple robes, although now a little worn with age, is taken aback. ‘You don’t appear to be dead,’ he says in a post-death whisper.

You shake your head.

‘Huh… that’s a turn up for the tablets – so what are you doing here, trying to get your lover out of Hades, like that Orpheus fellow?’

‘Nothing so simple. I’m actually trying to save the world,’ you reply.

‘Hah, hah, very droll. Well, I guess if you don’t want to tell me, your business is your business.’

‘No really…’ you start to protest but the bargeman puts up a hand.

‘Don’t bother, I know you’re a paying customer and all, but I’ve heard it all before. I’ve been doing this for a long, long time, after all. Shall we go?’ He starts punting the barge upriver.

You are sailing up the Acheron, the river of woe. Roll two dice:

score 2-5: the kraken wakes! ► **484**

score 6-8: corpse rat swarm ► **378**

score 9-12: stirrings in the deep ► **578**

766

Try as you might, you just can’t think of anything, your mind is a blank. Prometheus stares at you. ‘Come on, do something!’ he bellows. You rack your brains, but time runs out. Soon the eagle has gobbled up all the meat Deucalion had, and it soars up into the air and turns its attention to you... Down it swoops cawing savagely.

This eagle is huge, as big as elephant, and it is coming for you.

► **541**

767

Write the number **305** in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet (in place of the number already written there, if any) and then ►**568**

768

You find your rhythm and manage to hit home thereafter, bursting the padlocks and his chains fall away. Unfettered, his vast blubbery body spills out in great rolls of fat, virtually immobilising him. You are able to close in, cutting great gobbets of fat off the obscene mass that is Blubberjaw at will, until he is dead. ► 247

769

Time is fleeting and fluid in dreams. The scene changes. You are older, not yet an adult but grown big enough to disdain the company of little children. So perhaps it irks you when, arriving at a stream shaded by willows, near a pool that is a favourite spot of yours, you find a gaggle of younger children giggling and splashing about noisily in the water.

What do you do?

Drive them off ► **358**

Trick them into leaving ► **253**

Show them a better spot ► **317**

Join them ► **495**

770

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 328 immediately. If not, read on.

As you draw near, you see four male shades and one female shade who seems to be in charge, seated around a brightly coloured rug that has been laid out over the grave-cold earth of Hades. The woman is seated on a low chair, the others on the rug. Cups, jugs and plates have been laid out but you cannot see any food or drink at all. They all appear to be silently staring at the rug, as if expecting something to happen. You walk up to them and ask. 'What have we here?'

'Welcome,' says the woman, her eyes keen and bright, even in death, and dressed in a relatively clean and fresh funeral shroud, 'to the philosophers' picnic!'

'But there is nothing to eat or drink.' you say.

'Ah, indeed, and there's the rub,' says another.

'You see, Protagoras here,' says the woman, pointing at the shade sitting next to her, 'of the Sophist school, has proposed that all things come to those who wait.'

You cross your arms.

Another shade, in a cap with a staff and voluminous robes and looking very, very old, pipes up, 'And I, Xenophanes, proposed that we test this hypothesis by waiting.'

You scratch your head.

'And I,' says another with a long beard and a scroll under his arm, 'Cleanthes the Stoic agree – because it is the waiting that is the thing from which we can learn, not the outcome. After all, whether the proposition be true or not is of no import!'

You run your hand through your hair and sigh.

'And I, Aristippus the Cyrenaic couldn't care less about any of that - all I want is to stuff my face with food and drink!' says a fat, bald philosopher. 'For what else matters?'

'And I, Aspasia, chair of this philosophers' salon in Hades have allowed it, on the basis that we've got nothing else to do and plenty of time!'

If you have a **Summer Palace picnic hamper** and wish to lay it out on the rug before them ► 647

If not ► 165

771

You walk into a large, square chamber, well-lit with lanterns on the walls. In the centre, is a large sarcophagus of solid gold, carved with friezes of the life of King Midas. Around its base, grave goods are piled. The walls too are painted with murals showing his earthly accomplishments, including the tales of his touch turning things to gold. These show him turning a field of roses into gold, also a banquet into gold, and then, tragically, his own daughter…

Just as you are examining the murals, a figure steps out from behind the sarcophagus with a weighty, thudding step.

It is a statue of a golden woman. Or rather, an automaton of gold, for it is walking. She takes another heavy step forward. You pause in surprise for it is more than an automaton, more like a living statue of gold than a machine, as the likeness is perfect, down to even her hair, which are like thin strands of gold. She is actually wearing robes of light blue, and a white mantle, draped over her golden shoulders. She is beautiful.

The golden maiden heaves a great, despairing sigh.

‘Not another tomb robber. Must I crush their skulls for ever?’ says the golden maiden in a booming voice. Will you:

Try to get the element of surprise and instantly attack ► **363**

Talk to her ► **132**

772

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 119 immediately. If not, read on.

Being a responsible adventurer, you have been regularly feeding and changing the baby in the reed basket you found on the river Styx. And now it has grown, and fast – unnaturally fast. It is no longer a baby, but a toddler, running around your home, playing with your stuff. Some of it dangerous, deadly stuff, but hey, the kid seems happy and sensible enough to deal with it. In fact, his eyes – for it is a boy – seem filled with preternatural intelligence. Wise beyond his years. You feed him up some more, and get him a new set of clothes, as he's that bit older. Now turn to the section number written in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet to continue what it is you wish to do at your home.

773

You have decided to explore a spider infested swamp, forested with man-eating trees, and filled with webs and traps. The trees grow larger here, black-barked, gnarled and encrusted with knobby protrusions. Twisted faces seem to glare out at you from the crooked trunks, and their boughs slowly reach for you, creaking and cracking. Higher up, branches mesh together, creating a kind of roof, plunging the fetid, stinking swamp into shadow. Spider webs are strung between the trunks – but rather than the silken threads you would expect, these webs are of slime and very sticky indeed. Fruits hang down like butchered carcasses in a slaughterhouse. Every now and again, an enormous spider, the size of a shield, scuttles out of the slime-webbed canopy to feed on the engorged fruit.

Beneath the waters to either side of your path, bodies lie submerged. Humans, somehow preserved by the waters or the venom of the spiders, upon which the trees feed, so that they might sprout the fruit that feeds the spiders in a foul and unnatural symbiosis.

You pick your way through a path of compacted mud that makes its way through the swampy waters inward to the centre. There is little room for manoeuvre here. Will you:

Go on ► 65

Get the Hades out of here ► 25

774

There is a sudden click and from both sides of the arch way, stylized – and lethally sharp – bronze claws slash out at you.

Make a GRACE roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **815**

Fail ► **46**

775

The hatch is hard iron with a heavy lock. If you have an **iron key** ► 470. If not, read on.

You cannot open the iron hatch. You can do nothing more here, so will you:

Go to the mountain gate ► 454
Follow the wall south ► 325

776

The *Threnody* slowly approaches the Island of the Hydra King. Cypress trees surround the edges of the isle, allowing you to approach unseen. Hydna anchors the barge at the beach. ‘We’ll wait for you here, or rather, what’s left of you. Judging from past visits, your headless corpse will be tossed out of his lair onto the beach here. Poseidon knows what he does with the heads, swallows ‘em down I guess – I mean, it’s all about the heads with hydras, right?’

‘I’ll be back, I promise you,’ you say with heroic bravado.

‘Sure you will. Don’t worry, I’ll make sure you get a decent funeral.’

You step onto the Island of Polykephales, King of the Hydras. ► **48**

777

There is a clap of thunder out of a clear sky. You fall to the ground stunned and your god appears to you in a vision, saying, ‘Well done, mortal, that’s two of the three great labours of Hades completed. One more remains. And now, your reward...’

When you recover, you find that you are holding an object of sacred power. If you worship…

Apollo: a **golden lyre (CHARM +2)**

Ares: an **iron spear (STRENGTH +2)**

Artemis: **winged sandals (GRACE +2)**

Athena: an **abacus (INGENUITY +2)**

After recording the item, turn to the section number written in the Current Location space on your Adventure Sheet**.**

778

As you pass, you watch the siren reclining on the river bank, a beautiful mermaid, with long flowing hair and a face like starlight and roses. You try to ignore the rest of her body, which is that of a dolphin. You can see her playing the lyre, but can hear nothing. Soon you have left her far behind. Will you:

Continue to the delta ► **762**
Debark onto the south bank ► **537**
Debark onto the north bank ► **51**

779

You cross the silt and sludge of the delta to the small hill with the stone hut atop it.

Words have been etched over the doorway. '*In Lethe's lake they everlasting oblivion taste*.'

It appears the hut is built over an opening in the ground, with a ladder running down into the dark. You can hear the rush of running water coming up from below. Will you:

Descend into the dark ► **238**

Leave it for now ► **493**

780

The **sceptre of Agamemnon** stirs once more. From it rise tendrils of darkest night that close around your heart, spreading out through your entire body. Your will is failing, your mind falling under some kind of enchantment.

'You are mine!' whispers Nyx in your head.

Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 10.

Succeed ► **759**

Fail ► **641**

781

You round a bend of the river to be greeted with a foul stench and a hideous sight. The surface of the river here is clogged with dead corpse rats. They were half rotten and stinking in the first place but now they are truly putrescent. Choking on the stench, you wave the bargeman to punt faster, and soon you have left the rotting rats behind.

- **364**

782

Once upon a time, you found a baby in a reed basket, and looked after it for a while. It grew fast and into a young man at a preternaturally rapid rate of development. It turned out he was the son of the titan Prometheus, imprisoned by the gods and tortured for the crimes of creating mankind and giving them fire. Deucalion is his name, and he is tasked with rescuing his father from his prison, in the deepest reaches of the underworld, Tartarus and Erebus.

He is waiting for you here. He is of a slim build, but is weighed down with a bulging backpack, a coil of rope over one shoulder, a shield hanging from the other, and he holds a long spear with a lantern hanging from the top in his other hand.

‘Have you come to help me in the rescue of my father?’ says Deucalion.

Help him now ► **142**

Leave and come back later ► **234**

783

You find your feet making their way over to one of the rusty iron cages against one wall. You look down. The silver buckles you sewed onto your shoes are glowing eerily, and you are unable to control your own movements.

You walk up to the cage. There is a door at the front that just swings open, no one has bothered to lock it. Inside, a woman sits on the cold, hard floor, rocking back and forth, sobbing. She holds a child's doll in her hands, and every now and then she takes a long hair pin from the doll's bonnet and stabs herself viciously with it. Her body is covered in little scars where she has repeatedly stuck herself.

Could this be the mother of that ghostly girl in the well, the mother who killed her own daughter, near that ruined old farmhouse on the Plains of Howling Darkness? It seems like she is torturing herself far more efficiently than the Furies ever could, so they've just left her to it. Will you:

Leave her to her fate – she probably deserves it ► **172**

Try to help her ► **422**

784

You throw the **venison sausages** or the **strix stew** to one side of the chamber. Cross whichever one you used off your Sheet. There is no live game in this river, and the maggots sense its freshness, a welcome respite from an unending diet of dead flesh. They swarm *en masse*, fighting amongst themselves in their desire to feed upon the meat, leaving you an easy way out of the chamber. You run past following the river tunnel onward.

► **589**

785

Hydna and the *Threnody*, her funeral barge, are nowhere to be seen. Perhaps she is taking someone on a tour of the Bayou. There is nothing for you to do here.

- **796**

786

You return to the main road that runs through the Mourning Fields. Melancholy and despair drag at your heart but you cannot let them overcome you or you will remain here forever.

Nearby, you see moss-green hand prints on the portal of a tomb. From within, sobbing can be heard. Opposite the tomb is a crumbling building with a faded sign that says, ‘The Baths of Klytemnestra.’ Further on, the road descends deeper into the Fields.

Investigate the hand-prints ► **152**
Visit the baths ► **182**
Explore further ► **26**
Leave the Fields ► **10**

787

The heat that comes off the river of fire sears your flesh if you get too near. Even at this distance, you can feel the blistering heat. You begin to sweat, holding your hand up to shield your face from the burning heat. However, you notice **lava gems** bobbing in the ‘waters’. Some are even thrown upward by exploding geysers of flame, to land at the river’s edge. Gobbets of flaming napalm also land on the banks. You could try and grab a lava gem. If you want to try, ► **44**

If not, there is nothing you can do here, it is simply too hot. Where will you go?

North ► **711**

West to the confluence of the Styx and the Phlegethon ► **504**

East ► **193**

South to the swamps ► **38**

788

You approach the *Sea Shadow* once more, a barge of jet black wood, painted with chipped and fading silver motifs.

‘Welcome, living one. Another river cruise, eh?’

You nod. ‘Very well then.’ Cross 5 pyr off your Adventure Sheet. If you don’t have the money, you will have to go back to the bridge.

Will you go:

North-east by river ► **524**

West by river ► **401**

Go back and cross the bridge on foot ► **145**

789

After an arduous climb, hauling yourself up over rivers of hardened lava, you make it to the summit. You stand on a rocky ledge, looking down into the volcano. Smoke, steam and gouts of flame bubble up from the depths, and the heat is almost unbearable.

You notice other shades nearby, throwing things down into the viscous, heaving lava below. They are making offerings and muttering prayers to Thanatos, the death god, as they do so. To make an offering ► **90**

Otherwise, there is nothing more you can do here. Will you:

Explore the mountainside ► **644**

Leave the volcano ► **410**

790

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **808** immediately. If not, read on.

‘Word of your exploits has reached us, even here in Hades,’ says Perdix. ‘You killed the Nemean lion, right? Well, I once met a blacksmith from far Indoo, and he taught me how to make the tiger’s claw, or *bagh nakh* as they call it. All very well, but not that different from our cestus, really.’

‘Tell me more,’ you say.

‘However, I heard the Nemean lion’s talons can cut through iron armour, so it should be a fearsome weapon indeed. It’ll fit around your hands like a cestus battle glove, but far more deadly. All I need is an **adamantine whetstone** and the Nemean talons.’

If you have an **adamantine whetstone** and wish to give it to Perdix ► **634**

If not, there is nothing else to do here so you return to the Asphodel Meadows ► **75**

791

Your song falls on deaf ears, and only seems to enrage the vengeful ghost further. You will have to fight for your life.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► **83**

Fail ► **115**

792

If you have the title **Arcadian art dealer** ► 265 immediately. If not, read on.

If you have the codeword ***Painter*** ► 528 immediately, if not read on.

If you have the codeword ***Napalm***, ► 607 immediately. If not, read on.

A shade dressed in a painter's smock sits before a blank canvas, gazing at the fiery Phlegethon river, whose flaming waters fill the grey skies of Hades with a reddish, luminescent glow. The river banks are too hot and charred for anything to grow there, but further away, a few white poplars grow, their bone-white bark seeming to sparkle with crimson light in the glow from the river of fire. Off to the right, where the Styx meets the Phlegethon, steam roils upward, in ruby-edged clouds of vapour.

The view is apocalyptic, the light and the colours utterly unique. Nowhere else in the world, or even all of the worlds that are, have been or shall be, would you find such a view.

As you approach, the painter, staring at the sky, finally notices you.

'Oh, hello,' he says, looking you up and own. 'Well, well, you appear to be actually alive!'

'I am,' you say. 'And who are you?'

'I am Apelles!' he says proudly, thrusting out his spectral chest.

'Who?' you say.

'What do you mean who? You've never heard of Apelles, one of the greatest painters ever to walk the green grass of Arcadia!'

'Umm… no.'

'Bah, ignorant barbarian!' mutters Apelles. 'Not that it matters really,' he adds. He gestures to his paint palette. 'I haven't got any paint. Haven't had any for ages, can't get any down here either, so I haven't laid a single brushstroke to canvas in years!'

'It's a spectacular view,' you comment.

'Indeed! If only I had some paint, it could be one of my greatest paintings ever! You haven't got any, have you?' says Apelles.

If you have a **box of paints** and wish to give it to him ► 55

If not ► 186

793

You sail on, but soon your bargeman tells you he can go no further. The river runs down from some mountains to the east. He nods a silent farewell, and you disembark on the banks of the Styx. Will you go:

West, overland ► 330
East, up to the headwaters of the Styx ► 60
South-west along the river by foot ► 504
North-west ► 237
South, to the land between the Phlegethon and the Styx ► 711

794

You offer Karya the escape of absolute forgetfulness.

‘You won’t have to suffer the pain of unrequited love, remorse, regret, or the memory of death, ever again,’ you say.

Karya’s face is lined with tears. You can’t help but notice that her tears are tinged with forest green.

‘But what am I without my pain? What would I be but another lost shade in the emptiness? No, thank you, kind adventurer but you are asking me to give up my love. I can’t do that, it is too great,’ she says.

‘As you wish,’ you say.

‘But I appreciate the thought – here, take this, I have no more need of it, for no one else wants it, and perhaps it will aid you in your endeavours,’ says Karya, handing you a **heart of oak**.

‘What.. what is this?’ you ask.

‘Why, my heart of course. Now leave me to my grief.’

Note the **heart of oak** on your Adventure Sheet and then ► 575

795

You are at the outskirts of the Slimeswamp. You can smell its fetid stink even from here. Will you go:

Into the swamp ► 38
North-west to the Styx ► 145
West ► 537
East ► 412
South to the Sacred Way ► 731

796

Time to leave the Black Bayou. Will you head:

North ► **521**

East to the river Acheron ► **588**

West ► **117**

South to woodland ► **228**

Change your mind and head back into the Bayou ► **273**

797

The kraken youngling fixes you with a stare from one of its coal black, cuttlefish eyes, gives a kind of low rumbling chirrup of what feels to you like thanks, and drops down into the river to feed. The phantasmal bargeman nods his appreciation. ‘Hopefully that will appease the god too,’ he says. Gain the codeword ***Nautilus***.

Where to now?

Disembark and east ► **51**

Disembark and south-west ► **228**

Disembark and north-west ► **273**

Continue upriver by barge ► **364**

798

This is the tomb of the Lost Hero. Perhaps you'd forgotten? It is sealed up again, within lies... what was her name? Anyway, you will know when the time is right to call upon her. For now there is nothing you can do but move on.

► **749**

799

Trapjaw is too strong for you. After a titanic battle, he breaks past your defences and rips one of your legs apart with his taloned hands. You fall to the ground – only to be swept up in his arms and drawn, still alive, into the snapping jaws of his chest, legs first. You struggle but you are too weak, and you watch in horror as you are devoured right in front of your own face. Mercifully, death comes as soon as his hideous jaws close around your torso, bursting your liver and heart. After such a horrible death, perhaps the gods will take pity on you

► **111**

800

If you have a **lodestone** and want to use it to fish with ► 236
If not ► 335

801

The air is filled with the shrieks and wails of the ancient dead, but every now and again you can hear a phrase or two that makes sense:

‘A little act of kindness can penetrate the thickest skull.’

‘The bite of the golden hound is greater than its bark.’

‘When Persephone plays her flute, even the darkest heart is tamed.’

‘Only the moonlit huntress can dispel the shadow of the wolf.’

As obscure as any oracle ever was. When you are ready, you can try again or head off.

Leave an offering of 10 pyr ► **740**

Leave the area ► **610**

802

☐

If there was a tick in the box already ► **291** immediately. If not, tick it now and read on.

Suddenly there is a great uplifting of the waters up ahead and something – someone – rises up out of the black river.

‘Aiee!’ cries the bargeman shade. ‘’Tis the goddess herself!’

The black waters fall from her as she rises. It is a woman, radiant with otherworldly beauty, her skin as black and shiny as polished ebony, her eyes also completely black. It is hard to make out any detail, for the grey light of Hades bounces off her like bright morning sunshine on a clear blue lake. She walks on the water, tall, mighty, imposing, like a giantess.

‘I am Styx and the Styx is me!’ she booms, ‘And only those who are without the breath of life should be upon my waters.’ She stands waiting, hands on hips.

The bargeman frantically gestures at you. ‘A sacrifice, she wants a sacrifice, you fool!’ he hisses. ‘Quickly now, do not anger the goddess!’

You think quickly. What will you offer? A libation of your own blood poured into the river? 100 pyr perhaps? Or maybe some food – **fresh fish**, **venison sausages** or **strix stew** if you have it.

Blood ► **431**
Money ► **74**
Food ► **302**

803

The mural shows the Trojan war in full flow, with Achilles doing battle against the Trojans. But by his side is a woman warrior, an Amazon princess it seems, who left her tribe for love and married a Greek king, and so ending up fighting for the Achaeans. Her deeds are seemingly greater and more heroic than those of Achilles for she battles the gods themselves. Apollo shoots an arrow into her eye, but she plucks it out and fights on, throwing the god down and humiliating him. Later, she shatters Poseidon's trident with her shield and even wounds the goddess Aphrodite with her spear. Even though the Lost Hero was doing Zeus' will in fighting for the Greeks, this was too great an offence against the gods, and they punished her for her hubris – by erasing the memory of her great deeds, her prowess in battle and all of her life's achievements from history. She became the Lost Hero, never to be remembered, never to be honoured, never to be recognized, no songs sung of her deeds, no epic poems written about her. Homer himself never knew that she'd even been born. She would sleep in anonymity, lost and forgotten, until the day would come when they would need her again...

The Lost Hero rises up from her dais, taking up the ancient shield, now looking bright and new, with the face of a one eyed cyclops painted on it and a long spear, its head still stained with blood, presumably Aphrodite's. Even though she has been resurrected somehow, you notice she is still blind in one eye from the arrow of Apollo. Such wounds never heal, you suppose.

You step back, unsure what is going to happen next. Can even you fight such a warrior?

But then she speaks. 'I am Lethia, the Lost Hero.' Her voice is strong, imperious and imposing. But even though she said her name only seconds ago, in a voice that draws your attention strongly, you find yourself struggling to remember it.

'You have brought my panoply of armour to me, and thus, as the gods decreed, do I live again. The gods granted me this boon, my one chance to redeem my honour and lift this curse, by serving you.'

You stand somewhat flabbergasted, dumbstruck. Her antique armour, where once it was rusty and begrimed is now brightly burnished, inlaid with blue and red. Her helmet has a magnificent red and blue headdress, the bronze metal encasing her head, but also a section of it coming down over her lost eye. She is tall and powerfully build as well as lithe and dextrous.

She is the closest thing you could imagine to a goddess of war without actually being divine.

And then she hands you the Horn of the Lost Hero.

‘When the time comes, blow this and I will come to fight by your side,’ she says. ‘Farewell, until we meet again.’

Suddenly you find yourself outside the tomb, the door sealed up once more. Cross off the **Panoply of the Lost Hero**, gain the codeword ***Nanny*** and ► **749**

804

You have come to the bridge over the river Styx. Will you go:

North ► **51**
South ► **537**
West ► **228**
South-east ► **25**
Follow the river north-east ► **504**

805

There is a loud splintering sound and then your front door bursts apart and falls to the ground in pieces. In rushes Mormo, the vampire lamia, holding a massive axe in both hands, the snake coils of the lower half of her body writing angrily. The last time she was here, she killed you!

At the sight of you her jaw drops in horrified surprise. ‘So, it’s true! The gods brought you back to life! First they curse me and now they bring back my sister’s murderer? Well, I won’t stand for it!’ and she swings the massive axe at your head. There is no time to do anything but fight. At least you know some of her moves this time.

Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 7

Succeed ► **645**

Fail ► **320**

806

‘What? What did you say?’ mutters the shade. And then she gives an incoherent shriek of rage and stabs you with the hat pin. You jump back as she scratches at your eyes with her long, unkempt nails, her shadowy face a mask of hate. But as you retreat, she sinks back onto the ground, sobbing.

You shake your head hopelessly. At least you tried, you tell yourself, and take your leave.

► 172

807

You offer Anchises a draft of **Lethe water** in exchange for the kiss.

‘These are the waters of forgetfulness,’ you say. ‘Be warned, you will forget everything, maybe even your own name.’

‘Sweet oblivion!’ says Anchises, ‘I will be free from this endless heartache.’ He grabs the Lethe water and drinks it down. Cross off a ‘charge’. If that was the last draft, do not cross the **Lethe water** off, simply put **x 0** beside it. You may be able to refill it later.

The waters work instantly. Anchises stares blankly at you and then wanders off out of the inn, leaving the small casket on the bar. You take it.

Note **Aphrodite’s kiss** on your Adventure Sheet, gain the codeword ***Nirvana*** and ► **352**

808

‘Have you got that whetstone? If so, I can make that bagh nakh from the Nemean lion’s talons,’ asks Perdix.

If you have an **adamantine whetstone** and wish to give it to Perdix ► 634

If not, there is nothing else to do here so you return to the Asphodel Meadows ► 75

809

The scroll explains that Typhon was a terrible dragon. He was said to have a hundred heads with eyes that could shoot fireballs, and he fought a mighty battle with Zeus, king of the gods, for control of the world. Typhon hurled mountains at Zeus, who threw thunderbolts back at him. After a titanic battle, Zeus was triumphant, blowing bits and pieces off of Typhon along the way that fell across all the lands, before hurling the dread monster king back down into the depths of Tartarus.

To cast the spell, you need the binding spell, written on a clay tablet, now shattered into three fragments, and one of Typhon's eyeballs. A clay spell fragment lies propped up against the shrine. All you need are the other two fragments and, well, Typhon's eyeball. Then you can summon the power of Typhon. Shouldn't be too hard, right?

Record that you have the first fragment of the binding spell on your Adventure Sheet – in your notes, not as an item, as you cannot lose it. This fragment reads:

'O Gaia, the Earth, Mother of Gods and Monsters, hear my words! Grant me charge of your son, the Terrible One, he whose breath is fire!

'O primordial Tartarus, Lord of the Abyss, Father of the Fearful Dragon, I invoke thee! Grant me the rod over your son, he whose voice is sound unspeakable!'

Once you have found all three spell fragments and the **Eye of Typhon**, get the codeword ***Neophyte***. You will have to return here to cast the spell as it will only work at this shrine. Good luck!

If you now have the codeword ***Neophyte*** ► **354**

Otherwise you return to the surface to continue your adventures ► **537**

810

Soon you have in your hand an affidavit of Sacrotes and Plota, swearing that they have witnessed Zeno's paradox occurring in front of their eyes and that it really did stop half way to its target. Most importantly they have signed it themselves, and their signatures are pretty much indistinguishable from those of Socrates and Plato.

Get the codeword ***Namesake*** (there is no need to record the affidavit on your adventure sheet). You return to the inn.

► **465**

811

The Garden of Persephone is a desert of black ash, a charred, smouldering ruin. Smoke still twirls up from the burned out pavilion but you have already gathered the **pomegranate seeds**.

Nothing has changed since you were here last so you move on. ► **416**

812

You have returned to Daedalus’s workshop.

If you have a **copper cog**, a **brazen trumpet** and at least one **lava gem** ► 361

If not, there is nothing you can do here. ► 51

813

You have been tasked with rescuing Lampeto, one of the daughters of Ares, cursed by the gods to be eaten by Blubberjaw the daemon for all eternity for her crime. Princess Myrina of the Halizon sent you. So far you have failed in this quest, but you can try again.

The river of fire is too hot to approach, but if you already have a **fireproof hide** and wish to attempt this task ► **134**

If not, you will need a **mammoth hide** and **vinegar of hades**. If you have these items and want to continue with this quest ► **402**

If you do not have both or you do not wish to attempt this now, you can come back later ► **787**

814

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **763** immediately. If not, read on.

‘Hold, mortal!’ says Charon. ‘It seems another of the living may have… umm… found their way past me without my permission’

‘Who would show such blasphemous disrespect?’ you say.

‘Indeed,’ rasps Charon, ‘but that is the least of it. This one also.. let’s just say I had a pouch of gold obols, the payments of the dead. Now I no longer have it...’

‘This mortal stowed away on your barge *and* stole your purse? The purse of the Ferryman himself?’

‘Yes, well, no need to rub it in. But if you could see your way to discretely returning them to me I would be grateful,’ says Charon in a low whisper.

If you have some **gold obols** and wish to give them to Charon ► **27**. If not, read on.

‘I’ll keep an eye out for them. I know exactly who took them, she robbed me too,’ you say.

‘Hah, a minx indeed!’ he says as he nods his thanks.

From here you can go:

East into the desert ► **686** in *The Hammer of the Sun*

South into the desert ► **400** in *The Hammer of the Sun*

North to the southern gate of Vulcan City ► **555** in *Workshop of the Gods*

South on the Sacred Way ► **72**

West into Hades ► **193**

815

You dive into a forward roll and the bronze claws pass harmlessly overhead. You note the footplate that set the trap off, so you can avoid it on the way back. Assuming you make it out alive…

Up ahead, the corridor opens up into some kind of antechamber.

► **720**

816

‘Ah, welcome back to my workshop,’ says Perdix the inventor, murdered nephew of Daedalus.

Perdix, inventor, craftsman, and smelter can perform various tasks for you. If you have some **copper ore**, you can get him to make you a **copper cog** on a one for one basis. For each **copper ore** you cross off, you can get one **copper cog**. Perdix will charge you 5 pyr for each cog he makes. You can also buy a few things from him.

	To buy	*To sell*
clockwork owl	50 pyr	–
brazen trumpet	50 pyr	–
vinegar of Hades	20 pyr	15 pyr

When you are ready, if you have the title **Lion Slayer** and do *not* possess the **Nemean bagh nakh** ► 790

Otherwise, you return to the Asphodel Meadows ► 75

817

You sing of his prowess as the great leader of the Greeks in the Trojan war, said to be one of the three greatest Greek warriors after Achilles, and how even Achilles called him ‘unequalled in strength and in the casting of spears’. You manage to skip over some of his more unsavoury aspects such as murdering his own daughter as a sacrifice to the gods or just helping himself to other people’s stuff.

His ghostly retainers clap in appreciation.

‘Our master would love to hear that song, you may pass, muse-chosen minstrel!’ Over the bridge you go, the ghostly shades of Agamemnon’s ancient retainers humming your tune as you pass.

► **479**

818

The bramble beast whips one of its limbs across your torso, ripping you open with its coppery thorns. You fall back with a howl of agony. Tick your Wound box. If you were wounded already, then this second wound is fatal, and you bleed out in the Garden of Persephone. At least your blood will feed her plants. ► **111**. If not, read on.

The wound is painful indeed, but you have learned from your mistake and are able to sense the rhythm of the bramble beast's attacks. ► **59**

819

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► **148** immediately. If not, read on.

You are travelling through the north west of Hades when you hear a short tune played on a flute. You look round, and there, some way off, is Orphea, the girl who stole all of your money! She wears her blue cap, red curls spilling out from under it, and her blue tunic with Scythian pantaloons, all looking somewhat the worse for wear.

She waves and shouts (from a safe distance), ‘Hello there, my hero! Thank you for saving my life, and even more of a thank you for all that lovely money! I’m in need of some new clothes after our lakeside adventure, so I’m off to go shopping in Arcadia, now that I’m flush and all!’

You take a step forward, hand on the hilt of your weapon readying a few choice words. She gives you a mocking smile and says,

‘Well, it’s been lovely catching up, my lovely, but I really must rush!’ and with that she turns on her heel and runs off, laughing.

You shake your head, a head filled with vengeful thoughts. She may think she’s some kind of queen of thieves, but she just told you where she was going, a bad mistake. Or was it a double bluff?

Either way, you will track her down one day. For now, it is time to move on.

► **511**

820

☐

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 17 immediately. If not, read on.

You hear the sound of iron-shod hooves thundering across the paved stones of the Sacred Way behind you. Turning, you see a massively muscled horse, as black as night, cantering towards you. It is terrifying enough but nothing compared to the rider. He is dressed all in black, wielding a single-bladed scythe-like axe in one hand, and a shield emblazoned with a stylized black vulture in the other. Red eyes glare at you from under a horned helm of unusual design.

Down out of the sky, black-feathered vultures swoop, circling the rider.

'I am Death Dealer, the champion of Thanatos,' says the black rider, in a steely, doom-laden voice that also sounds empty of feeling, pitiless like a cold north wind. 'The sleeping gods may dream up a decree that you shall not die, but you are a mortal and such things are an abomination in the eyes of the god of death, and cannot be endured.'

'Does not Thanatos sleep then?' you ask.

'Death does not sleep,' replies the Death Dealer.

'But surely, if you kill me, I will just come back to life again, so why bother?' you say.

'I'm not going to kill you. No, I shall drag you in chains before my master. He will be the final arbiter, for even the gods cannot save you from Thanatos, he whose touch is death.'

The Death Dealer dismounts, hefting his axe.

Fight Death's champion ► 73

Flee for your life! ► 409

821

□

Put a tick in the box. If there was a tick in the box already ► 657
immediately. If not, read on.

You have come to an ancient bridge of pale white stone that spans the Acheron, the river of woe. At each end, its entryway posts topped with statues of king and queen of the underworld, Hades and Persephone, and the guardians of the gates, Charon and Cerberus.

Two ox-drawn carts stand on either edge of the bridge, blocking each other's way. The drivers are shouting at each other angrily. They are blocking the bridge.

► 755

822

You walk up to the guards at the main entrance to the palace and move as if to walk straight past them. One of them puts out a spear to block your way.

'You cannot pass!' says the guard in a hollow voice. Make a CHARM roll at difficulty 7.

Succeed ► **632**

Fail ► **371**

823

You've been staunching your bleeding wound with a bit of old cotton. It is wet with your 'tasty' blood. Thinking fast, you soak it thoroughly and drop it behind you. She gives a strange moan of both delight and despair, as she cannot help herself and has to stop to feed, squeezing every last drop out of the blood-drenched cloth, savouring every drop, even if it means she has to give up the chase.

That gives you enough time to lose her amongst the shadowed hills of Hades.

But in your headlong flight, where have you ended up? Roll two dice:

score 2-5: ► **51**

score 6-9: ► **493**

score 10-12: ► **25**

824

You avoid its strike – easier now there's only one of them left. But to your consternation, you notice that Polykephales is beginning to regenerate. A new head is beginning to emerge from its massive body! You'll have to finish this quickly. Make a STRENGTH roll at difficulty 6.

Succeed ► **614**

Fail ► **131**

825

There are simply too many of them, and, although you manage to kill one or two, they swarm all over you, and you are savagely pecked and sliced. Tick your Wound box. If you were already wounded, then death is swift, for they slice you up, drink your blood and eat your eyeballs. ► **111**. If not, read on.

You beat a hasty retreat, and the strixes, having lost a few more of their number, are happy to let you go. You leave this place.

► **564**

826

You manage to break the bonds that are dragging you down but the rivers raging waters still toss you around until you are washed up at random. Roll a die.

score 1-2: North bank ► **51**
score 3-4: South bank ► **537**
score 5-6: The delta ► **493**

827

You ignore the dog as much as possible and concentrate on killing Tantalus. The dog bites you – tick your Wound box. If you are already wounded ► **311**. If not read on.

Sucking up the pain, you strike Tantalus down. He dies at your feet, and as soon as death claims him, the dog collapses in on itself, returning to its original form – a small statuette of a golden dog. You scoop it up and pocket it. Note the **golden dog (3 uses)** on your Adventure Sheet. You can use it up to three times to add +1 to any STRENGTH rolls you make in the future (can be added *after* you have rolled the dice). Cross off a charge each time you use it. When you have used up all three charges, keep the dog – you never know, there may be a way to recharge it. Lose the codeword ***Nefarious*** and gain the codeword ***Nought.***

► **257**

828

You find various materials from the City of the Dead – there are plenty of crumbling ruins to find the wood, and plenty of the bodies of the dead to find hair and sinews to create torque for your catapult. Make an INGENUITY roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **585**

Fail ► **282**

829

You have the **golden arrow**, but you have, perhaps rather foolishly, forgotten to bring a bow with which to shoot it. Grimly determined, however, you grasp the arrow in your hand like a dagger, as the demon-wolf closes in.

Make a STRENGTH or a GRACE roll at difficulty 8.

Succeed ► **648**

Fail ► **690**

830

It’s no good, the spiders are everywhere and even the trees are against you. You manage to hide in one but it actually gives off an ear splitting shriek, alerting the spiders to your presence. You fight heroically but you too are overwhelmed. This time they don’t bother with saving you for later.

► **159**

831

Cross the **box of paints** off your Adventure Sheet. Apelles looks up at you. ‘Well thank you, your patronage of the arts is gratefully accepted but I’m not doing another portrait of you, if that’s what you’re hoping for! Now, leave me be, I’m working on my next great masterpiece...’

You shake your head, pretty certain you could do a better job than the painting he is working on at the moment. Anyway, there is nothing more you can do here for now. Will you head:

North ► **60**
West ► **330**
South-west ► **504**
South to the Phlegethon ► **169**
South-east ► **193**

832

You are alone in the dark, unable to see your own hand in front of your face. You stumble back, reaching back to the archway you came through, but you cannot find your way and it is not long before you are utterly lost.

Your heightened hearing catches small sounds, each more terrifying than the last, a scrape here, a sigh there, until you hear footsteps in the darkness, coming closer, ever closer. Soon you can hear the sound of breathing, and then a voice whispers in your ear. ‘I am Thanatos, and my touch is death.’

A finger caresses your throat and –

Oblivion ► 750

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